

SOVIET RUSSIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

1939-1942

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AMASA STONE MATHER OF THE CLASS OF 1907 YALE COLLEGE

SOVIET RUSSIA'S  
FOREIGN POLICY  
1939-1942

BY

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TRANSLATED BY LEON DENNEN

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TO  
B. K. M.



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## INTRODUCTION

Russian policy is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma . . .

WINSTON CHURCHILL

Our policy is simple and clear . . .

JOSEPH STALIN

WHEN, in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles, Hermann Müller and Johannes Bell signed the treaty of peace on behalf of Germany, it was assumed that its most significant aspect lay in its concrete terms. People believed that by changing the map of Europe and imposing new obligations on Germany, the European problem would at last be regulated, if not settled forever. There were many heated discussions concerning the justice of the treaty, the financial burdens imposed on the vanquished, the Polish Corridor, and so forth. As events turned out, the main weakness of the treaty lay not so much in its text as in its final paragraph where, among the twenty-seven signatories, including even Liberia, Hedjaz, and Honduras, Russia's signature was lacking.

It is no exaggeration to say that as a result of this omission the voluminous Treaty of Versailles was destined to become a scrap of paper, to be merely an armistice of some seventeen years' duration. By 1936 the treaty was crumbling away bit by bit and a new European war was in the offing.

Russia, which for two centuries had played a highly important role in European affairs—a role at times conservative, at times progressive—was now completely outside the European scheme of things. Russia, which had defeated the Swedes, crushed Napoleon, partitioned Poland, liberated Bulgaria, crushed a revolution in Hungary, squeezed the Turks out of Europe—Russia, which had fought Germany for three years in the World War—was

not present at the postwar conference table. Russia had gained nothing, but in turn had assumed no obligations. Without Russia's aid, Europe could not remain stable for long.

For several centuries the complicated political structure of multinational Europe has been based on the balance of power. Contrary to the situation on the American continent, there is no European state sufficiently superior in culture, in economic strength, and in numbers for its authority and hegemony not to be questioned, resented, and opposed. European alliances and blocs were always formed to prevent other powers or combinations of powers from expanding, from getting too strong on the continent. Relatively long periods of European peace were possible only when the potential aggressor found arrayed against him a large and powerful military bloc. Thus Europe was able to check the growing might of France in the eighteenth century, and the Anglo-Russian alliance to break the hegemony of Napoleon. Thus, too, it was possible for the Anglo-French-Turkish alliance to strike a blow at mighty Russia in 1855, and finally for the Anglo-Russo-French entente to check the expansion of Germany under William II.

At every stage in the history of the old continent, when there appeared some candidate for mastery of Europe, the complicated wheels of that mechanism, the "European balance of power," began to turn. This was the foundation on which the cumbersome structure of European power-politics rested. Good or bad—Europe had found no other solution to its problems, despite many attempts to solve them in other ways.

The new Russia attempted to find a radical solution. She refused to treat the warring states as organic entities. She differentiated each state, each people, into social pyramids whose broad bases and lower stories, once in contact with one other, would fuse into an organic nationless entity. Once their foundations had been shaken by elemental forces of upheaval, the social skyscrapers resting upon them would collapse of their own weight. This was an entirely new system of internal and foreign policy. Its

first and basic principle was an all-embracing, organic union of peoples from below—an idea of a great dynamic force, whose levers could move the entire world. These were new concepts, which stirred up passions and kindled the spirit of sacrifice. They contained the moral justification of force and of bloody wars.

In accordance with this new concept, the foreign policy of Soviet Russia was one of voluntary and proud isolation, an avoidance of coalitions, alliances, or blocs with the "forces of the old world." Alliances and pacts were merely zigzags of policy, maneuvers demanded by the moment.

The Soviet policy of isolation met with a corresponding reaction on the part of the other European states, which were likewise convinced of the impossibility of forming a lasting alliance with the new Russian regime. Thus Russia could not become after the World War one of the pillars of the new European structure, which was to depend primarily upon the Anglo-French alliance.

This alliance, as events showed, was to maintain the stability of Europe as long as Germany, exhausted and weakened by the war, lay prostrate. Not that she was not being helped. For many years after Versailles Germany received economic aid from the West and even some military coöperation in the East. Such assistance presented at first no danger to the new European setup. However, it was to be only twelve to fifteen years before vanquished Germany would gather sufficient strength to embark on another European adventure.

Though rich and powerful again, a warlike Germany would nevertheless not have dared to break the peace of Europe if the coalition which opposed her in the fatal months of 1938-39 had been strong enough; if, pressed from east and west by strong military states, she had been denied elbowroom for expansion at the expense of smaller and weaker states. Only a military alliance of Britain, France, *and* Russia could successfully have opposed Germany's growing might.

Soviet Russia could not adhere to a European military coalition. As a matter of fact, neither the Soviet, Britain, France, nor even Poland and the Baltic States desired



Russia's full adherence at that time. Some people have blamed Chamberlain and Bonnet for lack of foresight; others have accused Stalin and Molotov of double-dealing. However, at bottom the tragedy was due less to persons than to a kind of historic inevitability.

When the new war broke out Russia remained on the side lines; at the same time she tacitly participated in it. Paradoxically, by her very absence from the field of battle she found herself in the very midst of the new war. She was there when shells whined over the hot desert of Libya and the stony mountains of the Balkans; when airplanes sowed death and destruction over Coventry, Hamburg, and Ostend; when sirens plunged the European continent into darkness and ships were sending out their last S.O.S. from the wide lanes of the sea.

SOME observers declared that Russia had reverted to the traditionally nationalist policy of the Czarist Empire. Others said that on the contrary Russia was continuing the policy of the Communist International. Both were wrong. Some said Russia had become an organic link in the Axis, while others were equally certain that she was ready to become an ally of the democracies. Again both were mistaken.

It was Soviet Russia's policy to stand alone. Distrustful of all other governments, obsessed by the idea of her world-wide mission, she sought to maintain the position of a "third power," outside of and apart from the two contending coalitions. Isolation remained the underlying principle of her foreign policy even after the outbreak of the war.

In the past two decades a great deal had changed. The volcanic eruptions in the "capitalist world" which were to shake the system of social pyramids, the eruptions upon which Soviet policy had been predicated, had either failed to occur at all or had slackened; the political parties abroad upon which the Soviet state had built its hopes a quarter century earlier were now weak and of little consequence. On the other hand, the Soviet state had developed and had grown stronger in both economic and

military power. Out of the early revolutionary chaos systems of life had emerged. It was now believed that the messianic ideal might be realized not through elemental forces, not through international revolutions, but chiefly through the might of the Soviet state. These were the paths of a peculiar nationalism. As yet, however, this Soviet state, surrounded by "capitalist powers," did not feel completely secure. At this point the new nationalism fused with the old internationalism: Leninism was transformed into Stalinism.

The ambition to remain a "third power" in the European diplomatic arena remained the guiding principle of Soviet foreign policy. Whatever combinations the Kremlin indulged in—whether the "anti-Fascist Bloc" against Germany or the struggle against the Anglo-French "war-mongers"—were merely maneuvers. Such combinations could not evolve into a full-fledged military alliance. No European power could reckon on Russia's unwavering support. At one end of Europe's diplomatic scales were Germany and her Axis partners, on the other the Anglo-French alliance: Russia was on neither side. Because of this uncertainty of the Russian position Germany was able in 1939 to tip the scales in her own favor.

Distrusting all alliances, relying only on her own strength, Russia's policy of self-defense called for territorial expansion from the Black Sea to the Rybachi Peninsula. The large slices of newly acquired territory were to serve as buffers against Germany. Territorial widening *instead* of military alliance. Riga, Hankö, and Kishinev seemed a better defense than Paris and London. In order to understand Russia's foreign policy during this period one must view it in its totality, rather than each step or action by itself. Neither the joint Russo-German partition of Poland, nor the Anti-German Pact with Yugoslavia in 1941, nor the war with Finland in 1939-40 can be properly understood if they are to be viewed as independent steps in her foreign policy and not as logical consequences of the basic theory of the "third power."

Russia's self-isolation was to be put to the test. In this test three historic dates are outstanding in their signifi-

cance. September 1, 1939—the day Hitler invaded Poland—was a logical outcome of this European situation. The second link in the chain of events was the fall of France on June 25, 1940, which, as we see now, had become something historically inevitable after September, 1939. This, in turn, paved the way for a third great date of the present war—June 22, 1941, when Germany attacked Russia and ended Russia's isolation. June 22, 1941, was history's sentence on the "third power" policy. The military alliance with the Western Powers, the alliance which was not possible in 1939 and which neither London nor Moscow ever seriously believed to be realizable, had proved to be the most realistic policy of all.

THE policy of isolation was not a caprice, a whim on the part of individuals, but a living, organic element of an entire Weltanschauung. It was not discarded even after June 22, 1941. A coalition war was inconsistent with the cherished and carefully nurtured theory of a "third power." Out of these contradictions, difficulties and frictions arose during the war with Germany. Here was a separate war within the framework of the alliance, there were the discussions about the military aims of the Allies, there were mistrust and suspicion and a lack of genuine contact between the Kremlin and the other anti-Axis countries, and there were the political discussions over the "second front." No, the old theories were not dead, even though they were now in the way of a united war; they were deeply rooted in the entire history of the movement. *Le mort saisit le vif!*

The easier tendency now is to shut one's eyes to these basic difficulties and contradictions. Russia has a tremendous role to play in this war, and all hopes are based upon her power to resist. Perhaps the waging of a coalition war demands that each party to the coalition be praised and exalted by its allies uncritically and without let; that each one extend a blanket justification to the other's internal and foreign policy. Such a course cannot apply to a work which seeks to probe deeper, behind the surface of the present moment. A serious study of Russia's foreign policy during the past few critical and fatal years cannot

limit itself to polite expressions of uncritical gratitude, but must look beyond the policy of today, anticipate difficulties which may arise on the path we are treading together. The great war in which Russia is now engaged has and will result not only in deeds of heroism and sacrifices but also in a crisis in her entire ideological and political system. Upon the outcome of this crisis depend not only the future of Russia but also, to a large extent, the postwar world order.

ANY study of Russian foreign policy in this crucial period of world history must be based partly upon indirect and unofficial information. The Soviet Government has published little official information on its prewar policy. England and France have refrained from making public any body of documents dealing with their relations with Soviet Russia during 1938-41. Germany has published seven *White Books*, but they scrupulously avoid the question of Russo-German relations. Therefore the chief sources for this work have been scattered diplomatic reports and notes of the Foreign Offices as far as they have been published; official documents and collections of documents which, although dealing largely with other problems, throw some light on the situation in Eastern Europe, speeches and discussions on the foreign policies by the various political leaders; and finally the daily press of Soviet Russia, America, and Western Europe. Having searched for, examined, and analyzed the available material, and having sought to present it as objectively as possible, the author hopes that he has not been guilty of too many errors. For such errors as he may have made, his only defense is that the importance of having a clear statement of Soviet Russia's recent foreign policy as a guide for the future justifies the publication of such a study without waiting for the publication of all the official documents.

D. J. D.

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# SOVIET RUSSIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

## CHAPTER I

### *CENTRIFUGAL FORCES*

#### *I. England*

BY the spring of 1939 after the occupation of Prague by German forces, British leaders, including Winston Churchill, Anthony Eden, the Liberal and Labor parties—even Neville Chamberlain and prominent Conservatives—were ready for an understanding with Soviet Russia. "We cannot achieve victory without Russia," said Sir Archibald Sinclair, spokesman of the Liberal party, expressing the prevalent opinion in Parliament, "but," he had to add with equal truthfulness, "we cannot find a point of contact with her." The obstacles to such a rapprochement, particularly the internal opposition in Britain, seemed at that moment almost insurmountable.

The prospect of a military alliance with Soviet Russia, the possibility of a victory of the Red Army over Berlin and of the triumph of Communism in Europe—the substitution of Russian supremacy for that of Germany—achieved with the aid of British arms, paralyzed for a long period the initiative of the British Government after it was already convinced of the vital need for a bloc with Russia. These internal doubts and vacillations hampered every move of British diplomacy, and as a result the hope was constantly reborn that a miracle—an agreement with Germany—might yet occur. Semiofficial or altogether unofficial persons were continually "exploring" the ground in Berlin and returning to London with vague promises and false hopes soon to burst like soap bubbles. Rumors of these promises, however, poisoned the atmosphere in Europe and upon reaching Moscow were employed effectively

as evidence of Albion's perfidy, as proof that England was cooking up a new Munich.

Anti-Soviet sentiments in England were, to be sure, gradually overcome, because of the larger problems involved, but more serious obstacles to an understanding with Russia arose to plague the British Government. The possibility of an agreement between Great Britain and Soviet Russia resulted in protests from a number of countries with which the British Government wished to maintain friendly relations. These included Spain, which had only recently been engaged in an unofficial war with Russia, rabidly anti-Communist Portugal, the Vatican, Japan—traditionally anti-Russian—with whom Great Britain at that moment was making every effort to keep on friendly relations, and Italy. This last country Neville Chamberlain still hoped to split from Berlin and attract to the side of Great Britain. There were alarms in these countries, inspired protests of the press, and threats of a break with Great Britain. Were Downing Street to heed these protests it would lose a powerful ally in the East of Europe; on the other hand, to ignore them was extremely difficult for the Government of the British Empire.\*

Even more tragic and hopeless were the contradictions that arose in the sphere of national and political independence. Great Britain had proclaimed to the world that she was ready to take military measures to "stop Hitler" who was destroying the independent states of Europe one by one and threatened to become the unchallenged master of the entire continent. In order, however, to come to an understanding with Russia and thus wage war effectively against Nazi Germany it was necessary to hand over to Moscow a number of small independent states and territories. To rescue the smaller states from the clutches of Hitlerism Britain had to permit Russia to devour four small independent states completely as well as parts of two

\* Lord Hastings told the House of Lords on March 28, 1939, as the Anglo-Soviet conversations had begun in London:

What would result from a close coöperation with Russia? Is it not the prime interest of this country to regain her friendship with Italy and the new Spain? Were not those two matters of vastly greater importance to the welfare of this country than any will-o'-the-wisp of friendship with Russia? (*Times*, London, March 29, 1939)

others. Poland and Rumania feared more than anything else the presence of Soviet troops on their soil. The Baltic countries, including Finland, were justly apprehensive that they might forfeit their independence should they permit Russian armies to occupy their territory. Perhaps, it was said in London and Paris, Moscow is right; perhaps Russia cannot fight Germany unless she occupies the territories of other countries. But for England to accede to these demands meant to commit violence against millions of people, to destroy the independence of a large group of states, at the same time raising aloft the banner of liberty and the right of self-determination.

This was not merely a moral problem. In England, and even more so in France, there were many voices who counseled that Moscow be granted *all* that she asked for, including the right to occupy the Baltic countries and the eastern part of Poland. But what might be the result of such an action in practice? Would not an agreement of this sort throw the Eastern states into Hitler's embrace and, instead of weakening him, merely increase his prestige and power? As a matter of fact, in the month of June, 1939, fear of Russia had already driven two Baltic countries, Latvia and Estonia, to sign a nonaggression pact with Germany. As for Poland, should she be faced with a similar problem, it would be even easier to find a point of contact with Berlin and thus realize Hitler's long-cherished dream of a German-Polish pact whose spear point would be directed toward the East. Thus, instead of a combination of forces against German expansion, Hitler might actually become even stronger. Such was the hopeless, the tragic situation in Europe in the spring of 1939.

## 2. *Poland*

Poland, too, was ravaged by similar contradictions. When the outcry for territorial revision was beginning to be heard in Germany, Poland was easily able to overcome her traditional social and national antagonism to Moscow, for she understood that the relatively minor question of Danzig was merely a prelude to demands for a more drastic



revision of the Polish-German frontiers and if she yielded to force once she might eventually lose still larger territories, particularly those that had once been under German and Austrian domination. Poland was seeking allies against Germany and was also ready to collaborate with Soviet Russia. She insisted merely upon one guarantee: that the loss of territory which she feared as a result of a conflict with Germany should not become a fact because of her pact with Russia. For to give permission to the Red Army to occupy the eastern territory of Poland was tantamount to losing it altogether. Why, then, go to war with Germany? At the same time the young Polish Republic, whose leaders after the death of Marshal Pilsudski were of a minor caliber, suffered from exaggerated national aspirations, dreaming even of colonies.

Poland's supernationalism had resulted in a conflict with Lithuania over the Vilno territory and with Czechoslovakia over Teschen. The relations between Poland and Russia—following the only large-scale war in which the new Polish Republic had been engaged—had never been normalized. Thus of all her neighbors (with the exception of Rumania), Poland maintained friendly relations only with Germany. When in the fall of 1939, these relations were near the breaking point, the Polish Republic found itself in a tightly sealed ring and with no reasonable way out.

Germany continued to push Poland toward the east against Russia. Beginning with 1935 this was the main objective of Hitler's foreign policy which he pursued with ever greater intensity in the years immediately preceding the war.

A break with Russia and the unification of all forces for the struggle against Communism was the slogan under which Hitler had sought to bring the smaller East European states under his tutelage. Every year Hermann Goering would make a visit to Poland where this would invariably be the chief subject of discussion.

Goering, for instance told the Polish Marshal, Smigly-Rydz:

Before Chancellor Hitler came to power, German policy had made many mistakes. The dangerous policy of Rapallo had been followed in relation to Russia. As the result of this policy, Germany helped Russia in military matters, armed her, sent her instructors, assisted her to build up her war industry. The old Reichswehr had had many advocates of rapprochement with Soviet Russia, but an end was put to this by the elimination of all such elements from the German army . . . These were serious mistakes which must never be repeated. Hitler completely reversed the policy, and has laid down the principle against which there was no appeal, that all contacts with Communism were prohibited. He had explicitly stressed his attitude when Marshal Tukhachevsky had passed through Berlin. Not only did he not receive him personally, but he had not allowed anyone from military circles to have any contact with him.<sup>1</sup>

“The former Chancellor, General Schleicher,” declared Hitler, “was justly murdered for no other reason than that he had sought to maintain the Rapallo Treaty.”<sup>2</sup>

The German representatives went to great pains to emphasize at these conversations that Hitler had not the slightest design upon the Ukraine, not even part of it. All speculations to the contrary, Goering would inform them, were erroneous since it was Germany's view that the Soviet Ukraine should be annexed to the Western (Polish) Ukraine. German territorial interests extended only to the northwestern Baltic States bordering on Russia. The Baltic would become a predominantly German sea and the Russian “window to Europe” opened up by Peter the Great more than two centuries ago would have to be barred.

In Hitler's opinion [Josef Beck, the Polish Foreign Minister subsequently reported] the community of interests between Germany and Poland, as far as Russia was concerned, was complete. For the Reich Russia, whether Czarist or Bolshevist, was equally dangerous . . . A strong Poland was an absolute necessity for Germany, every Polish division engaged against Russia was a corresponding saving of a German division.

The Chancellor further declared that he was interested in the Ukraine from the economic viewpoint, but he had no interest in it politically.<sup>3</sup>

After the conference at Munich between Chamberlain, Daladier, Mussolini, and Hitler, the latter began to regard the Russo-Polish question as most pressing. The Munich conference took place on September 29, 1938, and on the 24th of October Von Ribbentrop was already proposing to Poland a "general solution" of all disputed Polish-German questions including Danzig and the Polish Corridor, and a "united German-Polish policy regarding Russia formulated within the framework of an anti-Comintern front."

In these new circumstances a slight turn for the better began to change the trend of Polish-Russian political relations at the end of 1938. On November 26, in answer to Germany's alternating demands and diplomatic proposals, both Moscow and Warsaw made public a joint declaration, the essence of which lay in the following points:

1. Relations between the Polish Republic and the U.S.S.R. are and will continue to be based to the fullest extent on all the existing agreements, including the Polish-Soviet Pact of Non-aggression dated July 25, 1932. This pact, concluded for five years and extended on May 5, 1934, for a further period ending December 31, 1945, has a base wide enough to guarantee the inviolability of peaceful relations between the two states.

2. Both governments are favorable to the extension of their commercial relations.

3. Both governments agree that it is necessary to settle a number of current and long-standing matters which have arisen in connection with the various frontier incidents which have lately been occurring.

The declaration was accompanied by an official announcement of new trade negotiations intended to increase the volume of Polish-Soviet trade. In a report to his government the Polish Ambassador to Moscow expressed extreme gratification and surprise:

The atmosphere in which the negotiations were conducted could not have been more friendly. After the publication of the declaration, the Soviet Government dealt with a number of the desiderata I had advanced. Steps were taken to restore the cemetery of Kiev, an express train began to run regularly between the Polish frontier and Kiev, and a certain number of frontier incidents were adjusted.<sup>4</sup>

These, however, were but faint echoes of a turn in Poland's policy in favor of Russia. Rather than a genuine move toward a Russo-Polish alliance, it was Warsaw's diplomatic demonstration against Germany. Neither Colonel Beck, the Polish Government, nor the dominant political leaders in Poland even considered such an alliance. Russia was regarded as an enemy no less dangerous than Germany. Warsaw's policy was to maintain a proper balance between these two potential enemies in the East and in the West. Hence no Anti-Comintern Pact and no alliance with Soviet Russia. This was the policy that Poland adhered to until the very end.

The paradoxical principle of the Polish foreign policy of this period had been expressed by the semiofficial *Kurjer Poranny*: "Poland does not intend to join the Anglo-French-Soviet Alliance and sees no necessity to do so."<sup>5</sup>

### 3. *The Baltic States*

The Baltic countries in their turn, although remaining passive, played an important role in the history of the Anglo-Russian negotiations. As these countries differed in their geographical and political situation, the parts they played in the first stages of the history of the Second World War were also various.

Finland lies at the northern end of Russia's Baltic border line. Within the framework of the Russian Empire she was able to maintain a large measure of autonomy and subsequently gained her complete independence in the wake of the Russian Revolution of 1917. There was no historic reason for Finland to come into conflict with Moscow except for the Communist revolts in 1918 and her fear of the social and economic changes which would threaten her if Russia's foreign policy was victorious. As a result, almost from the first days of Finnish independence, threads were constantly being spun from Helsinki to Berlin as a guarantee against the Moscow menace.

On the opposite geographical end of the Baltic lies Lithuania, the most unhappy country in this group of states. Lithuania was not only directly in the path of the

Moscow-Berlin axis but she had also experienced in the short period of her independent existence all the ravages of a Communist revolution, Polish revolts, German occupation, and civil war. Between 1914 and 1941 the city of Vilno, Lithuania's traditional capital, changed hands no less than eleven times, establishing, it seems, a record even in the history of twentieth-century Europe. Her relations with Poland were poisoned by the Vilno question; those with Germany by the dispute over the port of Memel and the Memel district. Periodically, Lithuania had attempted to steer a pro-Soviet course but she had no common frontier with Russia. Her alliance with the northern Baltic countries, Latvia and Estonia, on the other hand, was regarded with suspicion by Moscow, which sensed the true motive behind it—the preservation of Lithuania's economic and social setup. In the spring of 1938 Poland forced Lithuania to resume normal diplomatic relations. A year later, when Germany seized Memel, this unhappy little country was forced to sign a pact with Hitler which in fact limited her independence in foreign relations.

The position of Latvia and Estonia, the two remaining links in this Baltic chain, was hardly more favorable. They had no common frontiers with Germany, but every political storm threatened to overturn the shaky structure of these states. Above all Latvia and Estonia feared their largest neighbor, Russia, and this fear grew as the Soviets developed into a powerful military state, as the Communist movements petered out in these countries, and the conservative elements, the peasant groups who feared social change above all, gained political ascendancy. Here it ought to be emphasized that not only Finland and Latvia but also Lithuania—and Estonia once again in 1934—had experienced Communist revolts.

The states of this area which were most active politically in 1939, while the Anglo-Soviet negotiations were going on, were Latvia and Estonia. Little was heard of Lithuania during these negotiations and Finland played a minor role in them. As far as England and France were concerned, the Franco-Polish alliance and the Anglo-Polish agreement not only guaranteed the inviolability of the Polish borders

but also extended, in view of the relations between Poland and Lithuania after March, 1938, to include the defense of the Lithuanian frontiers against German aggression.

It is well-nigh impossible to estimate which aim played the more decisive role in the prewar diplomacy of the Baltic countries: the defense of their independence against all aggression or the preservation of their social system against a Soviet-Communist threat. The truth is that both motives were decisive. The first prompted the governments of the Baltic States to distrust both Russia and Germany, while the second motive, social in character, made them antagonistic toward Moscow. Fear of Moscow thus was greater than fear of Berlin. Had history, in spite of the desperate resistance of these states, forced them to make a choice they would have tied their fortunes to Berlin rather than to Moscow.\*

One must take all these factors into account in order to understand the course of Anglo-Soviet negotiations in the year 1939. Beginning in May Moscow insistently demanded guarantees against "indirect aggression" coming from the Baltic countries. In time of war the Baltic States might easily have sided with Germany and, instead of being a barrier between two powerful enemies, have become a jumping-off place for the German Army toward the east.

When the position of the Baltic countries came up for discussion in London and Paris, their governments protested that their fate was being decided "behind the back of the most interested parties." They particularly objected to being forcibly harnessed to the Soviet chariot in "the interest of European peace." From their point of view peace in Europe should be secured without victimizing them; and domination by Moscow, they felt, meant the death of their independence. Their protests became louder

\* "They [the Baltic countries] were in deadly fear," writes De Courcy on the basis of authentic information supplied by the British Foreign Office, "that in the event of a Russian occupation on a pretext of saving them from Germany, apart from the wholesale butchery of the upper classes which would follow, the remainder of the population would be scattered over Russia and Siberia."

"To the Government classes [of the Baltic States] Russia was the great enemy. They were absolutely terrified of the Soviet . . . There was clearly the great danger that if a Russian guarantee was forced on these States they would move towards the German side" (John de Courcy, *Searchlight on Europe*, pp. 243, 189)

and stronger, and finally, on June 7, Latvia and Estonia decided to sign a pact with Germany. This was both a protest and a challenge to Moscow and London. Even if Berlin was the instigator of these pacts, even if Von Ribbentrop pulled the strings behind the scenes, neither the Russians nor the English were now able to arrest the pro-German course of the Baltic States. This, incidentally, lent additional importance to the prolonged and tortuous discussions about "indirect aggression" which were going on between Moscow and London in the course of their negotiations.

#### 4. *Soviet Russia*

"The Land of Socialism does not require the aid of any other power to defend its independence. Relying solely on its own strength it will be able to withstand the attack of any coalition and to destroy the enemy on his own territory."<sup>6</sup> These were the words of an official organ of the Russian Communist party in May, 1939. Published at the very moment when the Soviets were engaged in far-reaching negotiations with the Western Powers—negotiations that were in more than one sense a matter of life or death to the Soviet Union—this statement may be taken as an epitome of the history of Soviet foreign relations since 1939.

For over two decades Soviet foreign policy had been based on two assumptions: the inevitability of another world war and the dogmatic belief that this war must be anti-Soviet in character—a coalition of the world's "capitalist powers" against Soviet Russia. While the first assumption, resulting as it did in intense arming by the Soviets, strengthened Russia and gave her a decided advantage over the relatively unprepared "peace-loving nations," the other weakened her in that it gave the Kremlin a false conception of the coalitions and combinations of powers in the coming war.

Early in 1938, Germany, having conquered Austria, began to redraw the map of Europe. There was much talk in Moscow that "the new war has already begun." There

was little doubt as to Germany's true intentions and with Hitler pursuing an openly anti-Soviet policy there should not have been any. Under the circumstances Russia was only too well aware of the growing German menace. In the fall of 1938 George Dimitrov, the Secretary of the Communist International, who had achieved world-wide fame as the chief defendant in the Reichstag fire trial, published in a Moscow magazine, *Bolshevik*,<sup>7</sup> a chronological chart of Hitler's plan of conquest which is of great historical interest. Based on National Socialist charts circulated in Germany and Czechoslovakia, this chronological table given below anticipated with almost startling exactness the events that were to unfold in Europe in the coming months (an asterisk indicates coincidence with the dates or approximate dates on which Hitler subsequently invaded the various European countries):

Austria...	Spring of 1938*
Czechoslovakia.....	Fall of 1938*
Hungary.....	Spring of 1939
Poland. . . . .	Fall of 1939*
Yugoslavia. . . . .	Spring of 1940
Rumania and Bulgaria. . . . .	Fall of 1940*
France, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Switzerland....	Spring of 1941
Soviet Russia. . . . .	Fall of 1941*

This awareness of the German menace coupled with the firm conviction of Russia's isolation, was the guiding principle of Soviet foreign policy, a principle which found expression in the Kremlin's readiness to reach an understanding with Germany and in its underestimation of the feasibility and the value of an alliance with England and France. Essentially, it was a frantic attempt to divert the oncoming storm from Soviet shores and to direct Germany's military forces to the West instead of to the East. What the molders of Soviet foreign policy failed to understand was that "Munich" was already a thing of the past and that with the fall of Prague and the growing threat of further aggressive moves by Germany the European political situation had changed radically.

Similar principles also formed the core of Soviet foreign policy in the Far East. Realistically evaluating Japanese



expansionist aims, the Soviet Government had concentrated a powerful force on the Manchurian border. At the same time Russia was continuing to aid China. But in anticipation of a military conflict with Japan, the Kremlin was seeking an agreement not with other anti-Japanese powers but with Japan herself—an attempt to divert the Nipponese “war of intervention”—i.e., war against Russia—into the channel of “imperialist war” or a war among the “imperialist powers” themselves.

We have already indicated England's doubts, the difficulties that stood in the way of a military alliance with Soviet Russia, the contradictions in the policies of Poland and the Baltic States, and the political blind alley into which these countries had come. The reasons for Russia's reluctance to conclude a military alliance with England were no less deep and basic than those that made Britain, France, and Poland question the practicability of such an alliance. Basic Soviet concepts merely deepened the gulf which separated Russia from the Western Allies.

Behind the scenes a number of sporadic attempts had been made to reach some sort of understanding between Soviet Russia and Germany; they ended invariably in failure. In December, 1938, an attempt was made to renew the Russo-German “trade negotiations” which had been broken off the previous spring. In January, 1939, a German trade delegation even went to Moscow, but upon reaching Warsaw the delegation received instructions to turn back to Berlin. German vacillation prevented Berlin from establishing contact with Moscow.

When the German Government in its notes of March 16 and 17, 1939, informed the Narkomindel\* of the German occupation of Bohemia-Moravia, the separation of Slovakia from the Czechoslovak state and the formation of a Bohemian “protectorate,” Maxim Litvinov at once replied with a strong note of protest handed to the German Ambassador, Werner von der Schulenburg, on March 18: “The occupation of Czech provinces by German troops and the subsequent acts of the German Government can only be considered arbitrary, violent, and aggressive . . . The

\* *Narodny Komissariat Innostrannykh Del*—Soviet Foreign Office.

Soviet Government cannot recognize the inclusion in the Reich of the Czech provinces and also, in one form or another, of Slovakia, as legitimate."

This was a signal for a Russian rapprochement with England and France, a rapprochement which soon developed into negotiations for a military alliance. Four months of negotiations ended in a complete fiasco; during these same months Russia was negotiating simultaneously with London and with Berlin. She was enriched, so to speak, at each conference hall with the gains she achieved in the other. As the negotiations dragged on, both sides became more and more inclined to grant her greater concessions. Constantly increasing her demands, Russia was able after a while to gain concessions from the Germans which England and France could not possibly grant her.

At the start of the conversations Neville Chamberlain rather cautiously proposed a "common declaration" against the aggressor. Moscow demanded a more binding agreement. Great Britain consented but Moscow became apprehensive over the position of Poland. The Polish Government indicated that it would not be an obstacle to a "peace front" against Hitler. Moscow then raised the question of guaranteeing the borders of the Baltic countries. After some vacillation Britain agreed to give such a guarantee. Moscow introduced the question of "indirect aggression," asking in fact for the right to occupy the Baltic countries and, under certain circumstances, to invade them at once. She also demanded that "consultations" should be replaced by "automatic" fulfillment of the pact. Translated from the language of diplomacy into that of every day, it simply meant that Moscow (in fear of a new "betrayal," a new Munich) demanded the right to judge when war had begun. London could not agree to that. The British Government was fearful that it might become involved in war before it had an opportunity to exhaust all channels of peace, for the Moscow government was still considered rabidly anti-German. Finally, when the Stalin-Hitler pact was about to be announced, the painful problem of the occupation of Polish soil by Soviet soldiers was injected into the Anglo-Soviet negotiations.

The historic truth is that London and Berlin were the ones who were bargaining against each other at Stalin's counter. Assuming that Stalin was not prejudiced against England from the very outset, the price offered by Germany was much greater. In the very nature of things London could not offer as much as Berlin. At the same time, Russian fear of being betrayed, the repeatedly recurring rumors of a new Munich manufactured on the Wilhelmstrasse, distrust of England and the possibility that she might conclude a separate peace with Hitler, Russia's failure to understand the profound changes which had occurred in the summer of 1939 in British and French public opinion—the entire political situation in Europe made a pact between London and Moscow seem like a fantasy.

Such was the political climate in which the historic but altogether fruitless Anglo-Soviet negotiations of 1939 were carried on. Europe was only too conscious that it was rolling swiftly toward a precipice. Every effort was being strained to stop this mad rush, to turn it back. Everyone spoke of peace and hoped for peace. But fate—sometimes known as the "objective historic process"—decreed differently. It was two more years before history was able to dip its gigantic ladle into the political kettle of Europe, to cleanse it literally in one hour of thousands of outworn slogans and formulas and to push aside the Polish question, the problem of the Baltic States, of direct and indirect aggression, and to achieve on the dawn of June 22, 1941, what it had been unable to accomplish during the entire summer of 1939.

## CHAPTER II

SPRING, 1939

### I. *Hitler's Next Step?*

HAVING convinced himself that the German invasion of Prague on March 14, 1939, would not be resisted by the Czechs or by their allies, Hitler felt strong enough to send off another note to Poland, this time with new demands for changes in the status of Danzig and for an automobile road across the Polish Corridor. These demands, it is worth noting, were still accompanied by a proposal to create a *German-Polish military union against Soviet Russia*. On March 21 the German Foreign Minister, Von Ribbentrop, sent for Lipsky, the Polish Ambassador, and gave him to understand in no uncertain terms that Germany expected an immediate solution of the Danzig question—on Hitler's terms. At the same time "he emphasized that obviously an understanding between us [Germany and Poland] would have to include explicit anti-Soviet tendencies. He affirmed that Germany could never collaborate with the Soviets and that a Polish-Soviet understanding would inevitably lead to Bolshevism in Poland."<sup>1</sup>

The core of Germany's proposed "military union" with Poland was contained in paragraph 5 of the proposals which Hitler subsequently made public in his speech of April 28. It was camouflaged as a "guarantee of the independence of the Slovak state by Germany, Poland, and Hungary."

Warsaw, of course, understood what Germany was hinting at.\* Hitler's proposals were rejected by the Polish Gov-

\* In a speech of May 5, Col. Josef Beck, the Polish Foreign Minister, stated that Hitler had already broached to him the subject of an anti-Soviet military union. "The Chancellor of the Reich," said Beck, "mentions in his speech a triple condominium in Slovakia. I have to state that I heard that suggestion for the first time in the Chancellor's speech on April 28. In some earlier conversations allusions were only made to the fact that in event of a general agreement the problem of Slovakia could be discussed. There were in such

ernment on March 26. When the Acting Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Potemkin, visited Warsaw in the early part of May, at the very moment when Russo-German negotiations for the pact were about to commence, Beck informed him of Hitler's proposal about a joint partition of Russia which would separate Georgia from the Soviet Union, annex Russian Ukraine to the Polish Ukraine, etc.<sup>2</sup>

On March 23, two days after Von Ribbentrop's veiled ultimatum to the Polish Ambassador, German troops occupied the Memel district and Lithuania was compelled to sign a nonaggression pact with Germany. This pact, couched in formulas usual for such occasions—"both sides agree not to use force against each other or support an attack by a third power"—deprived Lithuania, in fact, of her political independence.

## 2. *New Trend of British Policy*

Beginning with March 15, however, the diplomacy of the Western Powers, particularly of Great Britain, had made a sharp turn. All British diplomatic energies were now directed, naturally enough, toward Poland, and England made up her mind to guarantee the Polish borders against aggression. Henceforth the negotiations between England and Poland proceeded speedily and smoothly and produced favorable results. In addition four days after Hitler entered Prague an "important diplomatic event" occurred in London which was played up by the world press as a sensation. Lord Halifax received the Soviet Envoy to Great Britain, Ivan Maisky, and Reuter's, the official British news agency, reported that important conversations were taking place between London and Moscow looking toward closer collaboration between the two countries.

The main objective of these negotiations was the British proposal for a joint declaration of England, France, Russia, and Poland against the threat of aggression, and in this

conversations various other allusions reaching *far wider and further than the subjects now under discussion.*"

connection mention was also made of the possible aid of Soviet aviation to the Polish (and Rumanian) armies in the eventuality of a German attack.

While not declining this proposal outright the Soviet Government on its part suggested a more demonstrative step such as a nine-power conference in threatened Bucharest. The British Government, however, regarded such a demonstration as "premature," particularly since even a joint declaration in which Russia and Poland would participate was bound to encounter a great deal of difficulty.

These conversations took place on England's initiative. On April 3 Chamberlain made in the House of Commons an ideological defense of the new trend in British foreign policy. Great Britain, he said, was ready to resist all attempts upon the independence of other countries. Russia alone was mentioned among all those countries upon whose active participation in this collective resistance he counted. "While ideological differences did exist between Great Britain and the U.S.S.R.," Chamberlain stated, "they do not really count in a question of this kind." It is important to emphasize here the core of this speech which was "independence of all states which may be threatened by aggression." This was the basic principle for Chamberlain, for the English people, and for France. At first glance this may seem, indeed, an elementary principle. If one is to go to war with Hitler, what is one fighting against if not his aggression, his violation of the independence of other states? Yet it was this very elementary principle which became unexpectedly a stumbling block to an agreement with Moscow. For without the violation of the independence of a number of small states an agreement with Russia was impossible. In the month of April, to be sure, the outlines of this dilemma were as yet not altogether clear.

Simultaneously with the "important diplomatic event" the British trade delegation which had gone to Russia under the leadership of Hudson, the secretary for Overseas Trade, returned to London. Its mission had not been crowned with great success. It had been accorded a "cordial reception" by the Russians, but the information

which the delegates brought back, particularly about Soviet military strength, was discouraging. The British delegates were also disconcerted by the prevalent mood in Moscow, by Russia's lack of confidence in England, by the undisguised fear lest Chamberlain's attempt to establish closer contact with Stalin be merely a prelude to a new Munich.

After the departure of Hudson Moscow released an official communiqué to the effect that Anglo-Soviet trade negotiations would begin soon. Despite this positive information, however, the tone of the communiqué was rather frigid and not at all indicative that the negotiations would meet with success.

Actually British indecision and vacillation gave Moscow some grounds for adopting this attitude. On April 1, for instance, the London *Times* emphasized that even though Great Britain had guaranteed Poland's frontiers, this guarantee did not cover "*every inch of the present frontiers of Poland.*" Consequently, the Russians reasoned, there is still a possibility of an understanding between Britain and Germany, and England's efforts to reach an agreement with Russia are perhaps only a diplomatic blind. Such signs of indecision on the part of Great Britain—natural and understandable in themselves—occurred quite frequently in those chaotic months.

In reply to the London *Times*' story of April 1, Moscow published on April 3 a "denial" of the report apparently circulated by the official French news agency, Havas, "that Russia agrees, in case of war, to supply Poland with military equipment and to deny raw materials to Germany." Tass, the official Soviet news agency, "is empowered to state that such a report does not correspond to the true facts, since Russia never gave such promises to anybody and never assumed such obligations."

This denial, coupled with increased German pressure, in the meantime strengthened pro-Soviet opinion in both England and France and the desire to find the road to a military understanding with Russia. Under the existing political conditions, however, neither Chamberlain nor

the French Premier, Daladier, could tell their peoples of the almost insurmountable obstacles which lay in the path of such an understanding.

At the end of March and during the first half of April the Soviet Ambassador, Ivan Maisky, was in almost daily contact with Lord Halifax, who would inform him of the diplomatic situation. At this time London completely overshadowed Paris, and Downing Street became the center of all important diplomatic negotiations. Maisky was thus called upon to play an important role in the European events during this and the succeeding period, taking, beginning with 1939, the first place among Soviet diplomats.

A cultured and talented journalist, Ivan Maisky had spent a number of years in London before the Revolution of 1917. His future chief, Maxim Litvinov, was at that time in London too. Whereas, however, the latter was already an orthodox Bolshevik, Maisky was an adherent of the Right wing of the Russian Social Democratic party popularly known as "Mensheviks." In the revolutionary period of 1918 he broke with the Mensheviks and contrary to their policy participated in the government formed at Samara which was engaged in bitter warfare against Lenin's government. Somewhat later Maisky joined the Communist party and subsequently was appointed to diplomatic posts. While Ambassador to London he gained a great deal of authority. Because of his loyalty and services to the Soviet Government he was honored in the spring of 1941 by being the first former Menshevik and ex-foe of the Soviets to be elected as a "candidate" to the Central Committee of the Russian Communist party.

On April 11 Lord Halifax informed the Soviet Ambassador that the British Government was ready to include Russia in an "antiaggression pact" but that the difficulty was with Poland and Rumania, who were reluctant to open their borders to Russian troops. An agreement with Moscow, then, would have to be made in a less sweeping form: Russia should guarantee the inviolability of the Polish borders, and a similar guarantee would also be given by England and France. An alliance in the form suggested by



Russia, he said, was not feasible at the moment. Maisky replied that he saw no reason why the Soviet Government should be anxious to aid countries that feared it!

When official negotiations opened, England on her part refused to guarantee Russia's borders on the ground that Germany, having no common frontier with Russia, would first have to invade Poland and hence a joint guarantee to Poland was sufficient. Moscow, however, was already by this time demanding a full-fledged military alliance.

On April 16 Maxim Litvinov, the Soviet Foreign Commissar, received Britain's new preliminary proposals and began negotiations with Seeds, the British Ambassador in Moscow. The proposals included: the supply by Russia of raw materials to her neighbors; the supply of arms and airplanes; the use of the Russian fleet in the Baltic and a rather indefinite measure of help by her army. England also agreed—in view of Moscow's mistrust of her—that Russia's intervention in an eventual war should be contingent on that of Great Britain and France. Moscow was very doubtful of the feasibility of such an agreement.

The Rumanian Foreign Minister, Gafencu, who had then arrived in London, made it known that Bucharest was opposed to the presence of Soviet troops on Rumanian territory although in every other respect his government was ready to collaborate with the Soviet Union. Poland took a similar position. Moscow then requested England and France for a genuine military three-power alliance and also a revision of the old Polish-Rumanian agreement so that it would not be aimed against the Soviet Union. The difficulties and contradictions thus mounted with every day and there was little hope for a speedy understanding.

The optimists, however, took it that an Anglo-Soviet understanding was almost reached. The Associated Press on April 17, 1939, cabled the following from Moscow: "The discussions were believed to have been ended tonight about the entry of the U.S.S.R. into the antiaggression front."

The second half of April, 1939, was most decisive in the feverish diplomatic preparations for war. What the public toward the end of August saw as a sensational turn of the

wheel of power-politics was already worked out at the beginning of May.

### 3. *Anglo-German Rivalry*

It was difficult for Hitler to part with his long-cherished dream of a German-Polish combination against the Soviets. While there was already a considerable increase in "pro-Soviet" sentiment among his advisers (Von Ribbentrop was the chief exponent of this new trend), Hitler himself was still the main obstacle. Unlike his satellites he realized that one can only once make effective use in international politics of the Bolshevik bogie.\* What if Poland should accept his plan within a month? Then the game would be spoiled, for he would have been compromised by his deal with Moscow.

Whenever opportunity offered, the German leaders underscored their hostility toward Russia. On April 6, 1939, speaking to the French Ambassador of Germany's political aims, Von Ribbentrop made it clear that above all the Reich aimed "to fight Bolshevism by every means, and especially through the anti-Comintern Pact."<sup>3</sup>

In his speech of April 1, 1939, after the Anglo-Russian negotiations had become widely known, Hitler berated England for her readiness to collaborate with the Soviets. A few weeks later, however, when the preliminary project for an Anglo-Russian agreement had been worked out by Downing Street, Berlin decided to make a countermove—to assure Germany of Russia's neutrality in her forthcoming war with Poland and the Western Powers.†

In the meantime a rift was occurring in the ranks of the

\* "Perhaps I shall not be able to avoid an alliance with Russia," Hitler said in the spring of 1934 "Perhaps it will be the decisive gamble of my life. But it must not be made the subject of hole-and-corner literary gossip, not played too soon. But it will never stop me from as firmly retracing my steps, and attacking Russia when my aims in the West have been achieved." (Hermann Rauschning, *Hitler Speaks*, p. 136)

† The Italian Minister, Count Ciano, subsequently related (in his speech of December 16, 1939) that during the months of April and May, 1939, Germany and Italy had discussed the question of placing their relations with Russia on a normal footing. Their aim was "to neutralize Russia and thus prevent her from participating in the encirclement of Germany by the Great Powers." Ciano and Von Ribbentrop eventually reached an agreement on this question.

anti-Comintern bloc. Hitler was indignant at the Japanese refusal to sign a military alliance with Germany. He regarded it as a clear indication of Nipponese unreliability and double-dealing and as another argument in favor of a Russo-German rapprochement.

Thus, in April, 1939, Berlin and Moscow began their negotiations which from the outset advanced slowly. Germany was seeking primarily a trade agreement without far-reaching political obligations. What Berlin hoped for was that Russia would remain neutral during a conflict with Poland, as she had been during the Czechoslovak crisis. It was difficult indeed for Hitler and his National Socialist party to overcome their aversion for the Soviet regime. But Stalin's speech at the Congress of the Communist party in Moscow had given the Germans some grounds for hoping that they might achieve their aim without assuming extensive obligations toward the Soviet.\*

By the middle of April the Soviet Ambassador to Germany was invited to the German Foreign Office and the Soviet Military Attaché to the German General Staff Headquarters. Immediately afterward both Soviet diplomats left for Moscow.<sup>4</sup>

It was no coincidence that Maisky left for Moscow at the same time as Merekalov, the Soviet Ambassador in Berlin. Symbolically, both Chamberlain and Hitler were speeding to Stalin in the Kremlin.

In Germany Hitler was the chief obstacle to a Russo-German rapprochement; in Russia Stalin was inclined more favorably. Stalin was ready to go all the way toward an understanding with Germany, provided that Hitler was not setting a trap for him and that the German proposals could be taken seriously. As a result, while continuing conversations with Berlin, Moscow decided to make London a far-reaching counterproposal of a full-fledged military alliance. Such an agreement would have represented a military bloc against all forms of aggression,

\* In this speech of March 10 Stalin bitterly attacked both England and France "who seek to drag the Soviet Union into war with Germany." It is our policy, said Stalin, to strengthen our trade relations with *all* countries.

would have included unlimited military help, and also taken up the question of the Far East. An agreement of this sort would have given Russia a guarantee against Japan; it would also have transferred to the Russian sphere of influence all the Baltic countries, the occupation of which would not be far off. (The last part of the scheme was finally realized by Stalin in the months of October-November as part of this bargain with Hitler.) The kind of agreement he asked for would have been of incalculable value to Stalin, but he did not believe that he could get it and looked upon his proposals rather as maneuvers in his bargaining with Berlin.

While news arriving from all sides was disturbing the Anglo-Soviet negotiations, it proved to be favorable for an opening of negotiations with Germany. On April 19 the Moscow radio mentioned that there were rumors that the British Government was advising Poland to seek an understanding with Germany. The following day the Estonian Minister of Foreign Affairs, while reporting to Parliament on the negotiations that Estonia and Latvia were carrying on with Russia, stated with pointed reference to the Kremlin: "Estonia is ready to do all within her power to defend her neutrality." On the same day, April 20, Poland again informed London of her reluctance to permit Soviet troops and airplanes to cross her borders.

Estonia and Latvia sent identical notes to Moscow stressing the fact that they were not threatened by war and hence were not in need of military assistance. In Tallinn and Riga the newspapers were reporting that Russia was "about to begin the defense of the small Baltic States" and was ready to send troops into their territories, much against their will. Two weeks later Latvia and Estonia announced their readiness to sign a nonaggression pact with Germany.

In the meantime Maisky was returning to London with new "all-embracing" proposals. With his tongue in his cheek he told reporters who interviewed him in Copenhagen: "I return very content; Russia's position is perfectly clear. We are going to assist Europe in case of aggression."

When Maisky delivered the Russian proposals to the British Government, Downing Street for some reason was very optimistic. But on the morning of May 1 the English Cabinet met and the entire hopelessness of the situation became clear at once. Portugal, for instance, threatened to oppose England in case of an Anglo-Soviet military alliance. Spain now joined the Anti-Comintern Pact. There was some apprehension as to the reaction of the Vatican toward such an alliance. England was also afraid of a break with Japan. The British Government anticipated no end of trouble and complications should it accede to Russia's demands. "The British ministers turned pale today when they stopped to consider the possible effects of an Anglo-Russian alliance."<sup>5</sup>

The British Government decided to decline Russia's proposal of a military alliance of April 15. Commenting upon the decision, the London *Times* stated on May 3 that although an agreement with Soviet Russia was of paramount importance, "a hard-and-fast alliance with Russia might hamper other negotiations and approaches." Reuter's reported officially: "Interested powers look askance at collaboration with Russia. They feel that such collaboration will result in the adherence of more powers to the anti-Comintern pact."

The mood in Paris was in general similar to that of London. The French Government discussed the entire problem at a meeting of May 6, at which Foreign Minister Bonnet reported not only the attempts of the Pope to mediate between Poland and Germany without the participation of Moscow but also the progress of the conversations with Russia. In general, the spokesman of the French Cabinet indicated that "the French Government is lukewarm to the Russian idea of a sweeping guarantee to the small states."<sup>6</sup>

The political situation in Western Europe and the futile conversations with Moscow were all the more tragic since during this period two momentous events had occurred: Hitler's speech and Litvinov's dismissal. On April 28 Hitler delivered a long speech in which he did not mention Russia but announced instead the abrogation of three trea-

ties: the Munich Agreement, the Polish Pact of 1934, and the Naval Agreement with Great Britain. He thus shelved completely the idea of a German-Polish union with its spearhead directed toward the East.

For the Kremlin the abrogation of the first two agreements, both obviously directed against Russia, sounded like the sweet music of victory. The collapse of Munich enhanced Russia's prestige; the abrogation of the German-Polish agreement isolated Poland; while the denunciation of the London Naval Agreement marked the final stage in Anglo-German conflict. The implications of Hitler's speech were: for England war; for Russia rehabilitation and neutrality.

## CHAPTER III

### ANGLO-RUSSIAN AND GERMAN-RUSSIAN NEGOTIATIONS

#### I *German Proposals*

IN early May, 1939, Anglo-Russian conversations were lagging. On May 2 the British Government rejected Moscow's proposals, and the same day Maxim Litvinov was removed from his post as Foreign Commissar of the U. S. S. R. Litvinov's eclipse was the final act which rounded out the era of "democratic fronts," the civil war in Spain, and the "struggle for peace and collective security."

Litvinov was displaced by Vyacheslav Molotov, the Chairman of the Soviet of People's Commissars. At the same time it became known that in the course of conversations which were already going on in Moscow Germany had offered Russia a nonaggression pact on condition that the Soviet remain neutral and refrain from supplying her opponents with arms and other military equipment in case Germany became involved in a conflict with other powers. Another condition was that in case of war Russia should maintain economic relations with Germany and supply her with foodstuffs and raw materials.<sup>1</sup>

For the last twenty-four hours [reported French Ambassador Coulondre from Berlin on May 9] the rumor has spread through the whole of Berlin that Germany has made or is going to make proposals concerning a partition of Poland. This rumor is so persistent that the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires himself was much struck by it, and when I met him this evening, asked me in an excited manner: "Have you learned that the Soviet Government has decided to change its policy?" As I remarked that it was rather for me to put the question to him, he stated that he had received no indication whatever from Moscow which would justify him in thinking that the rumors circulated were founded on fact.<sup>2</sup>

The German-Soviet negotiations were conducted in Moscow, and the German Ambassador, Werner von der Schulenburg, was destined to play a prominent role in the diplomatic events of 1939-41. Handsome and clever, a diplomat of the old school, he was not suspected by Moscow of adherence to the anti-Soviet policies of the new German rulers. He made no secret of the fact that he was disgusted with the Nazi regime and its political methods.\*

The negotiations in Moscow proceeded rather slowly since Molotov insisted on Russia's political demands, whereas Ambassador von der Schulenburg was primarily concerned with economic problems. In May Molotov informed the German Ambassador quite openly that "closer trade relations were all very well, but what Stalin most desired was closer political relations"<sup>3</sup>—an agreement whereby Russia would be able to advance her border all along the entire western line and which would also provide her with other guarantees in case she were forced to wage war.

Berlin was convinced that in any case it would be able to reach an agreement with Russia should the necessity arise. On May 27 Hermann Goering told Neville Henderson that in contrast to the situation in 1914, Germany had no reason to fear the British since now "Russia out of self-interest would not give them any effective military assistance."<sup>4</sup>

Joachim von Ribbentrop, who was the chief exponent of a rapprochement with Russia, was constantly dangling a Russo-German pact before the eyes of the Western Powers. "The Führer," he would say, "will come to an understanding with Russia; it may be that we shall witness a fourth partition of Poland."<sup>5</sup> Deliberately and methodically he played up the possibility of a Russo-German pact. At the beginning of June he planted an "informer" who told the French Ambassador in Berlin about the prepara-

\* G. E. R. Gedye in the *New York Times* of September 2, 1940. It is said that the former Czech General, Syrový, who went over to the Germans played an important part in the preliminary work for the Russo-German Pact. He went twice to Moscow as Hitler's special emissary. This is also related by the former U. S. Ambassador to Moscow, Joseph E. Davies, in his *Mission to Moscow* (p. 445) who received this information from the German agent in the United States, Captain von Rintelen.



tions then going on for the conclusion of an agreement between Soviet Russia and Germany at Poland's expense "The reserve that Hitler is observing with regard to Russia," said the informer, "is evidently not due to chance." He also pointed to the new tone assumed by the German press toward Russia.

These were mere diplomatic maneuvers. Hitler still hoped to scare England and France with the specter of a Russian pact, while still avoiding a binding political union with the Soviets. At this time he inquired of General Keitel, Chief of the German General Staff, and of General von Brauchitsch, the Commander in Chief of the Army, whether in their opinion an armed conflict would result in favor of Germany. Each replied that much depended on whether Russia remained neutral or not. In the first case General Keitel replied, "Yes," and General Brauchitsch (whose opinion had greater value) replied, "Probably." However, "both declared that if Germany had to fight against Russia, she would not have much chance of winning."<sup>6</sup>

On May 31, 1939, Molotov delivered his first public address as Commissar for Foreign Affairs. Touching briefly on Russo-German relations, he gave a rather pessimistic account of his conversations with England and France. For many of the optimists and advocates of an understanding with Russia in the Allied capitals this "maiden speech" of the Foreign Commissar was indeed a bombshell. He revealed that early in 1939, when the German trade delegation turned back in mid-route to Moscow, Ambassador Schulenburg had continued the negotiations. No positive results had been achieved. But now, said Molotov, "to judge by certain signs, it is not out of the question that the negotiations may be resumed."

This was a clear warning to London. The English and French Envoys in Moscow expressed their displeasure at the new tendency by not attending the meeting of the Supreme Soviet at which Molotov spoke. The German and Italian Ambassadors were present, and were seen "leaving the assembly hall arm-in-arm, smiling broadly."

Soon afterward, the trade negotiations were renewed. In

the middle of June a German trade delegation headed by Dr. Helmut Wohltat arrived in the Soviet capital. According to several sources, the systematic Russo-German trade negotiations, which culminated in the August Pact, began at this time. They continued for more than two months; under the cloak of trade negotiations they also included political conversations.

## 2. *"Indirect Aggression"*

The full account of the ill-fated Anglo-Soviet negotiations has yet to be told. The British Government had been at one time preparing to publish a collection of documents on the Anglo-Soviet negotiations of 1939, but in the spring of 1940, particularly because of vigorous opposition on the part of the French Government, it was decided not to release it. Yet the broad outline of the question can be drawn from the materials now available. These facts, by and large, support the conclusion that, historically speaking, the proposals and counterproposals, the demands and counterdemands of the partners to these ill-fated conversations were well founded. Great Britain was certainly right in pursuing a cautious course, in her reluctance to tie her own hands and those of her allies by military obligations. Russia, on her part, had good reason for insisting on an outright military alliance. From her own point of view Poland was right in not wanting the Red Army to cross her borders, and so were the Baltic countries which were in mortal fear of Communism. The real tragedy of these negotiations lay in the hopelessness of the task which confronted the governments concerned: to unite all conflicting parties and clashing interests into a single military bloc.

Moscow sought a tightly drawn military union to cover all contingencies. London, on the other hand, wanted an agreement that would force Germany to pursue a policy of peace. Moscow distrusted her small neighbors; at bottom, London had no faith in Moscow. Soviet Russia wanted the initiative in her own hands, but for England that meant putting her own policy into Soviet leading strings. All these points of dispute, including the questions of "indirect

aggression," "automatic action," or "consultation," and the right to transport troops through foreign territory, were in the forefront of the diplomatic negotiations. By May 20 about thirty different schemes for an Anglo-Soviet agreement had been examined and rejected!

After the storm caused by the removal of Maxim Litvinov had somewhat subsided, London and Paris for some inexplicable reason turned to a more optimistic view of things. In the light of later events, this may seem incredible, yet in those chaotic days some accepted the downfall of the veteran Soviet Foreign Commissar even as auguring well for his side. In Litvinov's eclipse optimistic commentators saw even a hint from Stalin to both London and Paris to speed up the negotiations.

On May 6 the British Government proposed to Russia that in the event that she guaranteed the states protected by Great Britain and France, the latter powers would come to her assistance in case of an attack arising out of fulfillment of that guarantee.

This proposal went far to meet Soviet demands because to a considerable extent it was equivalent to an Anglo-French guarantee of aid to Russia in the event of an attack. In the meantime, however, Moscow was weighing German offers, and it was with that ace in the hole that Tass commented on the British offer in the following terms:

According to the proposal, the U. S. S. R. must aid England and France in the event of a war arising out of the guarantees to Poland and Rumania. But it is not stated that England and France must fight because of Russia if, in fulfilling the guarantee, the latter finds herself at war.

Here a new point of profound disagreement was introduced. London, in fact, was saying to Moscow: according to our agreement you will have to fight should we go to war over German aggression. But Moscow countered: will you, too, come to our assistance should Germany attack us? London in turn could point to the impossibility of such an attack, since Germany had no common border with Russia and would first have to attack Poland, in

which case both England and Russia were obligated to fight. Moscow was adamant. She insisted that Germany could conceivably engineer internal changes in the Baltic countries which would place pro-German governments at their helm, and this would constitute the first stage of aggression against the U. S. S. R. Thus the fatal question of "indirect aggression" came to the fore.

On May 11 *Izvestiya*, the official organ of the Soviet Government, charged that Great Britain and France desired the aid of Russia if Poland and Rumania were attacked but that they were not prepared to extend the same help to Russia if she became the victim of aggression. Furthermore, said the official Soviet newspaper, Great Britain and France intended to reserve the right to determine, without consulting Moscow, when they could commence resistance to aggression.\*

At the same time the Soviet official news agency claimed that the British suggestions

do not state that the Soviet Government must furnish a separate guarantee to each of the countries bordering on the U. S. S. R. They provide that the Soviet Government must come to the immediate assistance of England and France in the event that the latter powers should be drawn into military operations in fulfilling the obligations they have assumed toward Poland and Rumania. The British counterproposals clearly say nothing regarding any aid which the Soviet Union is to receive from England and France on the basis of mutual assistance, if the Soviet Union should in parallel fashion be drawn into military operations as the result of fulfilling obligations assumed toward one or another state of Eastern Europe.

In reply to this, Prime Minister Chamberlain stated in the House of Commons on May 9 that Great Britain and France were prepared to allow Russia to reserve the right to enter the war after England and France had already

\* There were influential quarters in France which echoed the Soviet view. Henri de Kérillis, the prominent Conservative leader, wrote in the *Époque* of May 7 that Great Britain was reluctant to guarantee the Baltic area because she feared that Russia would then be in a position to decide, in her own way, what situation was sufficient to provoke her armed intervention to put a halt to German aggression. De Kérillis took the position that the Russian demand for a Baltic guarantee was justified by legitimate national interests.

done so. This was intended to eliminate the Russian fear of becoming involved in a war with Germany while the Western democracies remained neutral. Chamberlain explained this proposed arrangement and went on to declare:

The Soviet Government suggested a scheme at once more comprehensive and more rigid, which must, in the view of His Majesty's Government, inevitably raise the very difficulties which their own proposals had been designed to avoid. His Majesty's Government accordingly pointed out to the Soviet Government the existence of these difficulties.

His Majesty's Government added that if the Soviet Government wished to make their own intervention contingent on that of Great Britain and France, His Majesty's Government, for their part, would have no objection.

The Soviet Ambassador, Ivan Maisky, continued, however, to insist that under the terms of the British proposal Russia might find herself engaged in war, while Great Britain and France remained on the side lines; this, for instance, would be the case if Germany chose the Baltic States, and not Poland, as her invasion route. Therefore, Russia's vital interests required that the Mutual Assistance Pact be extended to the Baltic. In that event alone, the Soviet spokesman argued, would the obligations be bilateral.

On May 14 British Ambassador Seeds transmitted a new offer to Premier Molotov and Vice-Commissar of Foreign Affairs Potemkin. The Soviet reply which came on May 15 did not bring the two sides any closer to an understanding.

In London, popular demand for a pact with Russia had been steadily increasing and there were repeated interpellations on the matter in the House of Commons. Dissatisfaction with Neville Chamberlain continued to mount, particularly after Lloyd George's blast on May 19 when he declared:

"Russia offered to come in months ago. For months we have been staring this powerful gift horse in the mouth." "And have seen its false teeth," interrupted Wing Commander Archibald James, a Right-wing Conservative.

"And we were frightened of its teeth," was Lloyd George's quick rejoinder. "Political snobbery," insisted the veteran statesman, was at the bottom of the government's inability to come to terms with the Russians. Winston Churchill warned that without Russia there could be no effective Eastern front against Germany. "If no Eastern front is established, what will happen in the West?" asked Churchill, and there was no answer.

In the meantime there was some hope that the conference of Foreign Ministers scheduled to meet at Geneva on May 15 might produce some sort of solution of the problem and ease the tense atmosphere. Vladimir Potemkin was designated to represent Russia at the conference. At the request of Premier Molotov, however, it had had to be postponed for a week ostensibly for the purpose of giving the Russian delegate enough time to reach Geneva. When it finally did meet a surprise awaited the assembly. It developed that Vladimir Potemkin was "ill" and that Lord Halifax would have to meet Ivan Maisky whom he could have seen any day in London. Nevertheless, optimistic reports based on little else than rumor were emanating from Geneva.

Another blow to the Ministers was the signing of a military pact between Germany and Italy whose significance was at first greatly exaggerated. To counter this blow, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bonnet, announced in an interview with the press that the negotiations with Moscow were proceeding favorably. "After a long conversation that I had yesterday with Maisky and Halifax," stated Bonnet in his interview with the *Paris Soir*, "I am firmly convinced that the negotiations between England, France, and Russia will soon result in an agreement."

### 3 *Contact with Berlin*

Russian talks with Germany were following their own hidden course. Despite the secrecy in which they were enveloped, certain reports were picked up. Many of these reports, received then with incredulity, later proved to be

correct. From the official *French Yellow Book* containing documents of 1938-39 it is obvious that Paris was forewarned of what might come. A dispatch of May 22 from the Berlin Embassy to the French Foreign Office certainly indicates that Paris was not entirely in the dark:

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Reich thinks that the Polish state cannot last very long. Sooner or later, it would be bound to disappear, once more partitioned between Germany and Russia. In Herr von Ribbentrop's mind such a partition was closely linked with the possibility of a rapprochement between Berlin and Moscow. Above all, it would give the rulers of the Reich the means of destroying the power of Great Britain . . . It was true the Führer was still opposed to the designs of the Minister for Foreign Affairs with regard to Soviet Russia. However, Herr von Ribbentrop has his backers, notably among the High Command and the more important industrialists. . . . At this moment, when Anglo-Franco-Russian negotiations seem to have entered the decisive phase, we should keep clearly conscious of the situation.

Reports were current in May, 1939, that not only Ribbentrop but Marshal Goering as well was urging a pact with Russia and that in Berlin official quarters generally the so-called "Russian orientation" was becoming more pronounced. The progress of Anglo-Soviet talks was being carefully followed, and Russia's possible choice played a large part in Nazi calculations.

The press also carried further intimations of the growing rapprochement between Berlin and Moscow. The London *Daily Mail*, for example, reported on May 29 that new trade talks were in progress between Germany and Russia and that the Soviet press was systematically playing down the talks with Great Britain. And from the German side the *Frankfurter Zeitung* ventured to predict in an editorial of June 18 that no agreement was likely between the Soviet Government and Great Britain. If Russia had intended to fight, the Nazi paper argued, she could have done it during the Czechoslovak crisis. Having remained aloof at that time, she was not likely to be stirred into action over Danzig or the Polish Corridor.

At this time President Roosevelt told Ambassador

Oumansky, when the latter was leaving to go to Moscow, to inform Stalin that if his government joined up with Hitler it was as certain as that night followed day that as soon as Hitler had conquered France he would turn on Russia. Mr. Roosevelt also asked his Ambassador to Moscow, Joseph Davies, to get that word to Stalin and Molotov, if possible.<sup>7</sup>

On June 28 the London *News Chronicle* reported that the German Government had decided to offer the U. S. S. R. a twenty-five-year nonaggression pact.

In mid-June a trade mission left Berlin for the Soviet capital, as already mentioned. In the course of the same week the London *Daily Express* reported that the German General Staff was insisting on an understanding with Russia.

Nevertheless, Berlin could not make up its mind to take the final step. Various groups, with their conflicting views, were working at cross purposes in Germany. This was particularly true of Ribbentrop and Goering whose mutual antagonism was well known. Hitler himself, despite repeated declarations by Britain, continued to count on the, by now, traditional passivity of England and France. He seemed certain that there would be no war over Danzig.

Throughout July the British and French Ambassadors in Berlin were receiving urgent instructions from their governments to make it clear beyond the shadow of a doubt to the German leaders that England and France were in dead earnest when they threatened to take military action in case of a further German aggression. The Allied Ambassadors were not slow in transmitting this information to Hitler, Ribbentrop, Goering, and to the influential State Secretary of the *Auswärtiges Amt*, Baron Weizsäcker. Great Britain was openly preparing to institute universal conscription and was expanding her aviation industry. The tone of the Polish press toward Germany was also firmer. Gradually it dawned upon Berlin that England and France meant business and that the Anglo-Russian negotiations might after all lead to an agreement.



For several weeks there was a certain doubt in German ranks. A European war against Germany with Russian participation would be a real threat. The entire situation was construed as a severe setback for Ribbentrop, regarded as the author and initiator of all the aggressive anti-Polish moves in Danzig. Goering accused the German Foreign Minister of frivolity and irresponsibility, and for a while it seemed as if Ribbentrop had lost out with Hitler too.

Herr von Ribbentrop [reported the French Ambassador Coulondre, on July 11] no longer enjoys the Führer's absolute confidence. The Führer has given expression to a certain number of grievances against his Minister.

The press campaign against Poland has become more circumspect. Several papers declared that Danzig is not *casus belli* . . . A similar note is heard in government circles.<sup>8</sup>

In July Germany beat a number of minor diplomatic retreats. In mid-July Hitler summoned the Danzig Gauleiter, Forster, and gave him new instructions which were regarded in diplomatic circles as a first step toward a rapprochement with Poland. Although the Führer still insisted that "there is no modification of German claims regarding Danzig and the Corridor," he also added the sensational statement that "nothing will be done on the German side to provoke a conflict on the question; the question can wait, if necessary, until next year or even longer."

Forster promised the High Commissioner of the League of Nations, Burckhardt, that he would publish an article in the Danzig press which "will put an end to all Danzig-Polish polemics, and the press will be ordered to drop the subject of Danzig completely."

As an indication of Hitler's good faith, the Danzig Senate at this time made several essential concessions to the Polish point of view in the difficult question of the Polish customs inspectors in Danzig.

The embarrassment in Berlin was at this time very considerable.

From information received during the last few days [cabled the French Chargé d'Affaires from Berlin on July 25] it follows that

the leaders of the Reich are at present in a state of extreme embarrassment, that once again pressure in opposite directions is being brought to bear on the Führer by advisers and that he inclines first to one group and then to another.

Two days later he cabled again:

In Berlin today everyone is more or less in agreement with the view that there is an apparent lull in the international situation . . . due to the impression of strength and resolution given by France and Britain to Germany . . . It does not appear that the Führer has made a decision. The keyboard is open before him: he can strike what note he will.

On August 1 the Chargé d'Affaires informed his Minister:

The first phase of the Danzig affair appears to have led to a setback for Herr von Ribbentrop, whom his opponents and especially Field Marshal Goering accuse of having irresponsibly involved Germany in a most dangerous policy.

The Führer himself does not know which policy he will adopt.<sup>9</sup>

At the end of July, 1939, London and Paris were under the impression that the political situation in Europe had improved considerably and that Hitler was engaged in a diplomatic retreat. Lord Halifax even instructed his envoys in the various European capitals, and also asked the press of Poland, not to emphasize the German "defeat" so as not to make it more difficult for Hitler to back down. Warsaw was more skeptical and lent little credence to the sincerity of Hitler's "retreat." In the end Warsaw rather than the British and French Ambassadors proved to be right.

By now Hitler realized that it was not the minor question of Danzig alone that was at stake. Hitherto he had marched unopposed from victory to victory. If he were now to retreat before the combined forces of the West and East, it might mark the beginning of a German defeat all along the line, for behind Danzig there loomed other far more significant questions. Hitler probably sensed that once Germany relinquished the initiative he would be faced with a powerful coalition which would eventually

force him to go on making one surrender after another: first Prague, then Vienna, and so on.

In this situation Hitler decided to take the final step, fatal and even tragic from his viewpoint: an all-embracing agreement with Soviet Russia. The question was now either an agreement with Moscow or the complete defeat of National Socialism.

On August 5 the German Government decided to consent to a comprehensive political agreement with the Soviet Union. It was an historic date when Ambassador Schulenburg informed the Narkomindel that he "was ready to negotiate a Russo-German pact."<sup>10</sup>

It was to this date that German diplomats now referred mysteriously when they refused to make even a gesture toward easing the tension over Poland. The British Ambassador, for instance, reported to the Foreign Office that Baron Weizsäcker, the State Secretary of the Auswärtiges Amt, had told him that "whereas it might have been possible before the fifth of August, it was absolutely out of the question now to imagine that Germany could be the first to make any gesture"<sup>11</sup> toward a peaceful solution of the Danzig question.

In reply to the French Ambassador, who had inquired on the same day as to just how the situation had changed, Weizsäcker said, "showing a certain embarrassment, 'It has changed. I can tell you no more for the moment.'"<sup>12</sup>

"Mr. Weizsäcker seemed very confident," added Mr. Henderson in this telegram to the Foreign Office, "and professed to believe that the Russian assistance to the Poles would not only be entirely negligible, but that the U.S.S.R. would even in the end join in the Polish spoils."

Thus, the decisive period in the Russo-German negotiations lay between August 5 and 18, the two weeks during which the French and British military missions arrived in Moscow and conferred with the political and military leaders of the Soviet Union. The Polish question played an important part in both sets of negotiations.

The day following the signing of the Moscow pact, August 24, Hitler received the British Ambassador and seemed far from elated at the new turn of events; indeed,

he was rather crestfallen. "Hitler observed," reported Nevile Henderson, "that it was England which had forced him into agreement with Russia. He did not seem enthusiastic over it." Subsequently the Führer stated on several occasions that "it was the saddest day" of his life.

#### 4. *Marking Time*

Due to the difficulties that had arisen, the British Government inquired anew on May 20 of Warsaw and Bucharest as to their reaction to a possible alliance with the Soviet Union. London had some hope that they would reply favorably. Three days later, however, both countries submitted almost identical replies which said in effect that while they were not opposed to an Anglo-French alliance with Russia which would also guarantee their borders, neither Poland nor Rumania would become parties to such an agreement. On the basis of these replies the British Foreign Office prepared a new project for an agreement which also included a guarantee of Poland and Rumania. Neither Latvia nor Estonia, however, was included in the guarantee.

When Lord Halifax returned from Geneva on May 25, Chamberlain told the House of Commons:

I have every reason to hope that, as a result of proposals which His Majesty's Government is now in a position to make on the main question arising, it will be found possible to reach a full agreement at an early date. On June the fifth, I hope it will be possible to give a complete account of the agreement which I trust by then will have been reached.

The very next day the British Government sent a new proposal to Russia based on the Geneva talks. According to the terms of this offer, Great Britain, France, and Russia were to extend mutual aid to each other in the event that

1. One of them became the victim of a direct attack.
2. One of the states of Eastern or Western Europe, included in the system of guarantees, became the victim of aggression.

3. Any state desiring to defend its independence appealed to them for aid.

According to the British plan, under any of these contingencies assistance was to be extended automatically and at once. In the event of the threat or the danger of an aggression, however, consultations were to be held before any action was taken.

Moscow found that this new proposal, which went a long way to meet previous Russian objections, still contained certain defects. Why the proviso for preliminary consultations if there was danger of an attack? and what about the Baltic States? What if the latter under pressure were forced to come to terms with Germany? In his speech of May 31 before the Supreme Soviet Premier Molotov formulated three Soviet conditions for an agreement:

1. The conclusion of an effective pact of mutual assistance between Great Britain, France, and the U. S. S. R.

2. A guarantee to the states of Central and Eastern Europe, "including without exception all European countries bordering on the U. S. S. R."

3. The conclusion of a concrete agreement by the three powers regarding "the form and the extent of immediate and effective assistance" in the event of an attack.

Molotov's reply presented to the British and French Envoys two days later was couched in the same spirit as his speech. While accepting some of the Anglo-British proposals such as the five-year term of the pact, the principle of mutual aid, etc., it insisted primarily upon a guarantee of the Baltic States.

Four days later the Estonian Envoy in London lodged a strong protest with Halifax against this sort of a guarantee of Estonia. Then Pierre Laval protested in the French Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs against the proposed pact with Soviet Russia.

Despite the quickened pace of diplomatic activity, negotiations seemed to have reached a deadlock. At this time Lord Beaverbrook demanded that the talks be suspended. In Berlin *Der Angriff* carried a scoffing cartoon which showed Chamberlain giving honey to a terrifying Russian bear wearing a Red Army uniform. The accom-

panying caption read: "The more I feed the beast, the more hostile he becomes."

The Russian reply to the newest British offer was received on June 3. The chief issue in dispute concerned the Baltic States and Finland. On June 7, 1939, the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs published in *Pravda* the new conditions put to Great Britain and France. A guarantee for Latvia and Estonia became the chief problem after the middle of May, 1939.

In justifying its new conditions the Soviet Government pointed to the danger of a pro-German coup d'état in the Baltic which, on the surface, might appear to be a purely internal change of regime but which would actually amount to a bloodless German conquest. Moscow argued that the Germans had perfected several effective methods to accomplish this purpose, such as a change of government under duress, the inclusion of a Seyss-Inquart in the Cabinet, an open coup d'état or a compulsory pact with Germany. Russia demanded that should any such situation arise in the Baltic, the Allied guarantee should be deemed applicable to it.

In reply to the new Russian terms Great Britain attempted, on June 8, to clarify its distinction between "automatic" assistance and "consultation," stating that in the event of an attack the guarantee of immediate aid would be operative at once but that in a case of indirect aggression consultation was necessary before undertaking a joint action.

In an effort to allay mounting impatience, Chamberlain told the House of Commons on June 7 that "there remain one or two difficulties to be resolved, in particular the position of certain states which do not want to receive a guarantee."

At the same time the Prime Minister announced that Finland, Latvia, and Estonia had made representations expressing their determination to remain neutral and rejecting any guarantee. That day, June 7, may well have marked a turning point in the success or failure of the effort to build up a "stop-Hitler" coalition. Not only did the Baltic States reject a tripartite pact of guarantee but

they also signed a pact of nonaggression with Germany. That was their reply to the Soviet efforts to include them within the security bloc. In this connection, the Estonian Minister of Foreign Affairs declared:

If a great power, without a request on our part, should desire to assume the role of our protector, we should be compelled to regard such help as an aggression against which the Baltic States are prepared to fight with all their resources.

Latvia and Finland took the same position, and the Finnish Minister, Procopé, insisted in a speech delivered at the opening of the Finnish Pavilion at the New York World's Fair on June 20 that his country would accept a guarantee from neither side.

This situation, coupled with the tenor of Chamberlain's speech, produced considerable dissatisfaction in London. Winston Churchill wrote in the *Morning Post* of June 8 that the Soviet demands for the inclusion of the Baltic States in the system of guarantees were entirely justified. The failure to do so, he pointed out, left a gap in the peace structure. The following day the British Government, in an effort to pacify public opinion and perhaps to settle the points still at issue, announced that it was sending to Moscow William Strang, the chief of the European department of the Foreign Office. This appointment gave rise to much discussion in London. There were demands that either Chamberlain or Halifax or in any event a ranking government official with authority to act go to Russia. It did not require a long memory to recall that Chamberlain had not hesitated to fly to Germany twice to negotiate with Hitler and that he had recently gone to see Mussolini. Was not the Soviet Government entitled to at least as much deference? Skeptics, on the other hand, took the Strang appointment as evidence that the Moscow conversations could lead to no real results and that a journey to the Kremlin by Chamberlain would have ended in nothing save loss of "face" for Great Britain.

Strang reached Moscow on June 13 with instructions to urge Russia to enter into a pact which, without naming the states covered by the tripartite guarantee, would state

that mutual assistance would be extended in any situation in which one of the three parties considered itself menaced by aggression. At the same time, however, Seeds was instructed to refuse "a blank check" for the declaration of war by Russia.

On the eve of Strang's arrival *Pravda*, the official organ of the Communist party, carried an editorial entitled "The Defense of the Three Baltic States against Aggression," analyzing some of the arguments which had been advanced against extending the guarantee to these countries, including their own unwillingness to enter the security bloc. Despite these objections, *Pravda* insisted that the guarantee was indispensable. The political fears motivating the reluctance of the Baltic States to accept a Soviet guarantee were not discussed in the article.

The series of meetings between Molotov on the one hand, and Strang, Seeds, and French Ambassador, Naggia, on the other, in the latter part of June and in July, led nowhere. The crucial point at this stage of the talks was the issue of "consultations" versus "automatic action." Behind this technical distinction lurked the question of which member of the proposed partnership was to decide the moment for concerted military action had come—Russia or Great Britain and France.

Under the terms of the British proposal, if the Baltic States were about to be attacked, the three powers would then confer to decide what action to take. Later, the British made a slight concession by suggesting "immediate" consultation. Moscow, on the other hand, demanded "automatic" action to implement the tripartite pact.

The Soviet Government also insisted upon the right to regard "indirect aggression" in the Baltic, such as might occur through a Nazi-engineered coup d'état in Riga or Tallinn, as a cause for automatic application of the pact. In effect this placed in Soviet hands the fateful decision of war or peace. To this Great Britain and France were unwilling to agree. Consequently Molotov rejected the British proposals of June 15 and 21. The Soviet action led to a fresh exchange of views between Great Britain and France and to a new British offer on June 29 which was discussed



with Molotov at the beginning of July. According to this offer, the Netherlands and Switzerland would be guaranteed by the Soviet Union, while similar obligations in regard to the Baltic States were to be assumed by the British Government. This offer was also declined by Molotov.

### 5. *Mutual Recriminations*

While conversations continued with the British on one side and with the Germans on the other, Andrei Zhdanov, one of the key men in the Soviet Government, published an article in *Pravda* of June 29 which placed the entire blame for the slow progress of the negotiations on the shoulders of Great Britain.

Andrei Zhdanov was one of Stalin's younger collaborators who climbed rapidly to power in the 30's. Generally regarded as Stalin's potential successor, he was, like his master, energetic, determined, and ruthless in the prosecution of his aims. During this period, particularly after the dismissal of Litvinov, he played a prominent part in the conduct of Soviet foreign affairs. He frequently spoke for Stalin himself. The absolute authority in the second largest city in Russia, Leningrad, Zhdanov was a key figure in the history of Anglo-Soviet negotiations and later also in the Russo-Finnish War which, in the early stages at least, was presented as a purely local Leningrad affair.

I allow myself to express my personal opinion [declared Zhdanov], although my friends do not share it. The English and French Governments do not desire the only kind of agreement that a self-respecting government could enter into. The Anglo-Soviet negotiations have already been in progress for seventy-five days, out of which the Soviet Government required sixteen days to prepare replies to the various British proposals, and the remaining fifty-nine days were expended in delay and red-tape on the part of the British and the French. Who then bears the responsibility for the fact that the negotiations have proceeded so slowly?

Zhdanov further pointed out that Great Britain had extended the guarantee to Holland and to Lithuania without

asking their consent. He also touched upon the still undefined position of Poland, and concluded:

The British and the French want the kind of an agreement in which the U. S. S. R. would enter in the role of a coolie carrying on its shoulders all the weight of the obligations.

The British and the French do not wish a real pact, but only conversations about a pact, so that by speculating with public opinion at home on the supposed stubbornness of the U. S. S. R. they may prepare the path for a deal with the aggressor.

The approaching days must show whether or not this is the case.

The strong note of irritation apparent in the Zhdanov article was paralleled by the increasing resentment expressed in London and Paris over Moscow's attitude.

Although this article emphasized that Zhdanov's friends "did not share his opinion," it would not have appeared in *Pravda* without Stalin's consent; it was a deliberate move in the diplomatic game with London and Berlin. Just at this time the French Consul General in Hamburg, Garreau, cabled to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Georges Bonnet, that according to his latest information "if some agreement is not shortly concluded between London, Paris, and Moscow, the Soviet Government will be prepared to sign a pact of nonaggression with the Reich for a period of five years."<sup>13</sup>

The London *Daily Sketch* charged that Russia did not intend to conclude an agreement, and a Conservative M. P., Pilkington, stated in the House of Commons on July 5 "that doubt is beginning to grow in this country whether the Soviet Government really meant" to conclude a pact.

On July 9 *Le Temps* asserted:

The matter must be settled one way or another because this diplomatic marking time has created an extremely unfavorable impression in countries sincerely and resolutely striving for peace.

The following day the Paris *Journal* wrote:

If the negotiations have at present come to a virtual standstill, the fault lies with Russia. She merely awaits the problematic

triumph of Germany to throw herself on Germany's neck and to confess finally to the existence of a German-Soviet agreement previously kept secret.

And Pertinax wrote in *L'Europe Nouvelle*:

Stalin and his advisers go too far in their demands that all hypothetical situations be defined on paper. Events cannot be anticipated by any formula. Problems cannot be solved unless the French, British, and Russians establish among themselves principles and mutual feelings of confidence.

He added, however, that it was essential for a high government dignitary to go to Moscow.

French opinion as a whole refused to recognize that the negotiations were breaking down and suggested that some new concession be made to Russia. In Great Britain, on the other hand, it was believed at this time that no agreement was probable in the near future. Yet the diplomatic conversations did not halt and there were even now occasional upsurges of optimism.

On July 1 and 3 Premier Molotov again received Strang and Ambassadors Seeds and Naggiar to consider the most recent British proposals, and the press suddenly predicted that a pact "will be signed on Thursday." It soon developed, however, that Moscow did not find the new Chamberlain offer acceptable. The British now agreed that the guarantees would operate "automatically" in event of a direct attack on the Baltic countries, but continued to insist on preliminary "consultation" in the event of "indirect aggression."

Molotov replied with a note of July 3 expressing the Soviet position in a new form. Moscow now demanded:

1. Express provisions regarding every form of indirect aggression.
2. The release of Russia from the guarantee given by England and France to Holland, Switzerland, and Luxembourg, on the ground that the latter states had not yet recognized the Soviet Government.
3. A preliminary military agreement with Great Britain and France prior to the conclusion of a pact, as well as preliminary agreements with Poland and Turkey.

The Soviet demands were not wholly unfounded. About this time the Finnish Premier, A. Cajander, made a public protest against "any kind of pledge or protection" by Soviet Russia concerning Finland. The Polish press too continued, despite the more friendly tone of Foreign Minister Beck, to play up the dangers of a direct collaboration with the Red Army on Polish territory. This was one of the trumps in Germany's hand, for it enabled her to call Moscow's attention to the precarious value of the proposed alliances. What was the value of a tripartite agreement which existed on paper only and which was likely to collapse like a house of cards within the first few days of actual combat?

Perhaps the best pages of the brilliant German diplomacy during the years preceding the Second World War were written during the maneuvers of the summer of 1939—the nonaggression pacts with the Baltic States, the Dutch and Belgian rejection on July 1 of any guarantee, and the torpedoing of the Anglo-Soviet talks by ruse, rumor, and misinformation.

On July 8 and 9 Molotov and Potemkin again met with the British and French representatives. Great Britain and France agreed to release Russia from the guarantee of the frontiers of Holland, Switzerland, and Luxembourg. In other respects, however, particularly on the question of automatic action in the event of indirect aggression, the two sides did not move any closer to an understanding. On July 17 Strang, Seeds, and Naggiar once more conveyed new proposals to Molotov, but the interview ended with fresh counterproposals by the Soviet Premier. In accordance with Soviet demands, it was agreed that a Franco-British military mission would now be dispatched to Moscow *prior* to the conclusion of a mutual assistance pact.

During the third week of July an incident occurred in Great Britain which fitted neatly into the German plans and which has still not been clarified in detail. Dr. Wohltat—Hitler's best economic negotiator—arrived in London, to confer on economic problems of secondary importance with Robert Hudson, the Secretary of the Department of Overseas Trade. He also met frequently with Sir Horace

Wilson, Chamberlain's most trusted confidant. In these conferences a plan of a general settlement of European problems was discussed; part of this plan was a British loan of a billion pounds sterling to Germany, while Germany would agree to the restoration of Czechoslovakia, limitation of armaments, etc. The rumors about these proposals caused a sensation in London's diplomatic circles. In the House of Commons Neville Chamberlain, in response to a question, stated that Hudson had advanced proposals on his own initiative and had reported to him after the meeting.

Chamberlain's declaration left the impression that he himself considered this kind of settlement reasonable provided that it be linked to disarmament and a general "restoration of confidence." The Labor M. P. Arthur Greenwood asked Chamberlain whether he was trying "to bribe Hitler to buy peace." The Berlin press called it a "fantastically stupid plan." Whether or not it was really a trial balloon, the distrustful Kremlin saw in these conferences a symptom of a renewed British appeasement.

The official declaration by the British Government that it had not been aware of these talks was greeted with natural skepticism. Even less stock was put in the Berlin denial because in any case it was impossible to believe that a German official would take the responsibility for such negotiations without direct instructions from his superiors. The actual purpose of these talks is still not clear. It is highly probable, however, that the German Foreign Office intended thereby to arouse Stalin's suspicion that Great Britain was still willing to abandon the "security bloc" for a direct understanding with the Third Reich. Amid the reports of the Wohltat-Hudson talks, Tass announced on July 21, 1939, that negotiations between Germany and Russia for a new trade agreement had been resumed. The German official spokesman, referring to the trade negotiations, said on July 24 that "the negotiations with Russia might be regarded as a sign of lessening tension."

The British Government did not accept the Soviet terms of July 17 but it did decide to act more energetically. On

July 27 it released an official statement that a pact would soon be signed with Russia and that staff talks with the Red Army Command were about to begin. On July 31 Chamberlain informed the House of Commons that negotiations for a political agreement would continue simultaneously with the military talks. He explained that Moscow did not wish to sign a provisional or partial agreement until a complete understanding had been reached, and that "the Russian Foreign Minister had expressed the view that, if they once began these military conversations, to which he attached very great importance, the political difficulties should not prove insuperable."

At the same time, the composition of the allied military missions was officially announced. The British were sending Admiral Reginald Plunkett-Erle-Drax, Air Marshal Charles Burnett, and Maj. Gen. T. G. Heywood. The French mission consisted of Lt. Gen. Joseph Doumenc of the War Office, General Valin of the Air Force, and Naval Captain Villaume. The two missions left London on August 5 aboard a British warship.

On July 23 and 27 there were further talks in Moscow between Molotov and the Anglo-French diplomats on the subject of indirect aggression. The matter came up again on August 2, at which time there seemed to be signs of an understanding. Molotov on this occasion also demanded that all separate peace talks and peace treaties be expressly ruled out.

The British press was pessimistic. The London *News Chronicle*, for example, recapitulated the concessions which the British Government had already made: Great Britain had agreed to guarantee the Soviet Union against aggression and had extended this assurance to cover the Baltic States; she had agreed to release the Soviet Union from the operation of the Franco-British guarantee to Holland, Switzerland, and Luxembourg; she had agreed, in the event of war, to conclude no separate peace; she had agreed to begin military staff talks before the conclusion of a pact. It was pointed out in Paris that the British and French offers of July went considerably beyond the Soviet demands of April.

The British proponents of a Russian pact continued their attack on the Chamberlain government. Lloyd George wrote in the *Sunday Express* on July 23 that the Prime Minister and Lord Halifax were responsible for the delay because of their passive attitude, and he recalled that they had not hesitated in the past to deal directly with Hitler and Mussolini. None the less, at the end of July it was believed that the only unsettled matter was the question of indirect aggression. That was what the French Foreign Minister, Georges Bonnet, meant when he declared in the Chamber of Deputies on July 29 that an agreement had been reached on all points but one; on this basis, there could be no objection to staff talks, and a military mission could safely go to Moscow.

At this point, the Soviet news agency again dashed cold water on the general spirit of optimism. On August 1 it issued an official statement conveying the impression that serious complications had arisen. Tass stressed the Soviet view that "the difference hinged on the question whether in the formula regarding 'indirect aggression' there remains no loophole which the aggressors could exploit to strike at the independence of the Baltic States."

### 6. *Generals Replace Diplomats*

On August 7 Strang left Moscow without having brought the negotiations to a successful conclusion. On August 11 the Allied military mission reached the Soviet capital to confer with the Russian military representatives. The spokesmen for the Red Army in these talks were War Commissar Voroshilov, Chief of Staff Shaposhnikov, Assistant Chief of Staff Smorodin, Admiral Kuznetsov, and Air Force Commander Loktenov. Just what transpired during these talks remained a secret to the very end. With the exception of the usual phrases regarding the "friendly atmosphere" nothing was made public. From the fragmentary reports carried by the press only an incomplete picture emerged.

All in all, these military *pourparlers* lasted only a few days. The meeting on August 12 was of a preliminary na-

ture. Two sessions were held on August 13, although it was a Sunday, and two additional sessions on the following day. A new factor was introduced by Poland's insistence on being represented at least during the concluding stage. To the world Poland's concern had to do with the Latvian port of Libau. In reality, however, Warsaw was vitally interested in a matter much closer home, namely, the possible use of Polish territory by Red Army forces during a war with Germany. Poland rejected this idea.

On August 16 the French mission gave a banquet in honor of Marshal Voroshilov. Foreign observers reported that the atmosphere was one of the greatest cordiality, that many toasts and compliments were exchanged. On the 18th the Allied missions attended a great display by the Red Air Force.

At this time, however, it leaked out that at the conference between Germany and Italy which took place in Milan on August 11 Count Ciano actually proposed to call a five-power conference, excluding Russia, for the purpose of settling the Danzig problem. Once again Moscow was in danger of being isolated. Germany, however, rejected Ciano's plan since Hitler had already up his sleeve a more profitable solution not only of the Danzig problem but also of the entire Polish question.

August 19 proved to be the fateful day. Under the ominous title "Attempt at a New Munich," *Pravda* reprinted an article from the London *Daily Worker* of August 7, explaining that it had been "delayed in transmission" since the 7th. The article described secret talks which it alleged had taken place at the time between the British and German Governments regarding the Polish question.

The intermediary between Chamberlain and the German Government is Lord Kemsley. Kemsley has just returned from Berlin. He saw Chamberlain both before and after his trip. All of this transpired without the knowledge of Parliament and even behind the backs of several advisers of Chamberlain himself.

According to this London Communist source, the Kemsley plan called for a repetition of the Sudeten war of nerves, mobilization, and then a new conference on the



Munich pattern. The fact that *Pravda* did not carry the *Daily Worker* story sooner was of tremendous significance. Its appearance on August 19, nearly two weeks after its publication in London, foreshadowed what was to come. The same evening the Moscow radio carried a Paris report that Chamberlain intended to engineer a new Munich during a recess of Parliament, and that Professor Harry Riley had been sent to Danzig to arrange a compromise between Warsaw and Berlin. Riley was slated to be the "Lord Runciman" of the new "betrayal."

On that day, August 19, a trade agreement was signed in Berlin between the Soviet Union and Germany. The official Soviet interpretation of this dramatic turn of events concluded with these unmistakable words: "*This may constitute an important step in the task of further improving not only the economic but the political relations between the U. S. S. R. and Germany.*"

No meetings were held between the Allied and Soviet military representatives in the interval between August 18 and 21. The session of August 21 seems to have been the last. The Russian negotiators were already aware that a pact with Germany was ready to be signed. Nevertheless, they demanded "full coöperation" on the part of Poland, i.e., the right to occupy Eastern Poland in the event of war.<sup>14</sup> The Allied military missions, on the other hand, were only willing to allow the Red Army to take up positions on the frontier until such time as Poland herself should request that Russian forces move into Polish territory to oppose the Germans.

The signing of the Soviet-German Pact, however, did not put an end to the projects of the military missions. Fearing unforeseen complications, Russia at first sought to maintain contact with Great Britain and France. To the inquiries of the British and French Ambassadors Molotov as yet found it expedient to reply that "a nonaggression pact with Germany does not eliminate the collaboration of the Soviet Union, Britain, and France in the furtherance of peace."

The military missions, which had already begun packing to leave Moscow, decided after Molotov's statement

to postpone their departure—much to the disgruntlement of the German Government. Germany was displeased with the continued contact between the West and the East. The French Ambassador Naggiar, complying with instructions from Paris, raised in his interview with Molotov the question of the Soviet attitude toward the Franco-Soviet Pact of 1935. The German Foreign Office semiofficially announced that “the Franco-Soviet Mutual Assistance Pact of May 2, 1935, is absolutely incompatible with the German-Soviet Pact and by that reason no longer in force.”<sup>15</sup> Naggiar left Moscow and flew home.

On August 25 Marshal Voroshilov invited the heads of the military missions to his office and there informed them that “in view of the Soviet-German agreement the Soviet Government feels that to continue the conference would be fruitless.”

The very same day, August 25, the allied military mission left Moscow. They were seen off by two Russian generals who later related this typical story: “The locomotive whistle blew; the train began to move slowly. We turned to each other and without saying a word burst into laughter.”

### 7. *The Parting of the Ways*

War Commissar Voroshilov gave an interview to *Izvestiya* on August 27, 1939, in which he explained the failure of the military talks mainly on the grounds of differences regarding the Polish question.

The Soviet military mission took the view that the U. S. S. R., having no common frontier with the aggressor, could only extend aid to France, England, and Poland through the passage of its troops through Polish territory. The French and British missions did not agree with the position of the Soviet Government, and the Polish Government openly announced that it did not require and would not accept the military aid of the U. S. S. R. These circumstances made military collaboration between the U. S. S. R. and these countries impossible.

Regarding the Russian attitude in the event of war, Voroshilov replied: “Help in raw materials and military

supplies is a trade matter for which no pact of mutual assistance is necessary." This was an intimation that despite the agreement with Germany, the Soviet Government reserved the right to trade with belligerent Poland. This reservation played a certain role in the diplomatic conversations which continued even after the outbreak of the German-Polish War.

The *Izvestiya* correspondent then asked the Soviet War Commissar to comment on reports abroad concerning the Soviet demands:

"The *Daily Herald* writes that the Soviet mission demanded the right to occupy, immediately upon the outbreak of war, the Vilna, Nowogródek, Lwów, Tarnopol, and Stanislawów districts, and stated that from these regions the Red Army would extend military aid to the Poles if it were necessary."

Voroshilov replied that this allegation was false. "The U. S. S. R. concluded a pact with Germany, among other reasons, because the military talks with France and England had run into a blind alley."

Five days later the war began.

Thus the diplomatic labors in the fatal year 1939 came to their tragic end. They were characterized by shortsightedness, national egotism, trickery, and errors. As the years pass, however, and passions cool, a more objective analysis and evaluation become possible.

The final judgment upon the foreign policy of the Soviet Government during that period can only be a negative one, particularly from the Russian point of view. But the guesses fashionable at that period to the effect that Russia was negotiating with England and France merely for the purpose of gaining military secrets for the benefit of Germany, that from April to July, 1939, she was already an ally of Hitler and was merely sharpening her knife to "stab the democracies in the back," were not borne out by the facts. Moscow was anxious to have an understanding with Hitler. But she mistrusted him and feared him. As a safeguard, in case a Russo-German rapprochement was not realizable, Stalin sought contact with London. The Soviet-German Pact, although absurd in itself, was

a logical result of conditions in Europe in 1939. It was twenty-two months before close contact between England and Russia, which came to an abrupt end on August 25, 1939, could be reestablished.

### 8. *Three Agreements with Germany*

In the latter part of August, 1939, Russia and Germany concluded three agreements, of which the famous Non-aggression Pact was not, as a matter of fact, the most important. The three were a Commercial Agreement, the Nonaggression Pact, and what was even more important, a Secret Agreement.

There was nothing unusual in the signing of a non-aggression pact between Russia and Germany. Such pacts had been usual enough in the decade during which Maxim Litvinov was the spokesman of Soviet foreign policy and had more than once been signed or offered to various governments. Customarily a pact of this sort contained a clause pledging the signatories to refrain from committing hostile acts against each other or from entering into coalitions with their respective enemies.

In two respects, however, the Soviet-German Pact of August 23 was unlike other pacts of nonaggression which had been signed by the U. S. S. R. To begin with, it omitted the usual clause stipulating that if one of the contracting parties should commit an act of aggression against a third party the other contracting party would be entitled to denounce the pact. The obvious reason for the inclusion of such a clause would be to emphasize the peaceful intentions of the signatories and to make certain that neither party would exploit the agreement for the purpose of committing an act of aggression. It is quite clear, of course, why this clause was omitted from the Nonaggression Pact which heralded the war between Germany and Poland. On several occasions immediately following the conclusion of the Russo-German Pact, V. M. Molotov, as Soviet Premier and Commissar for Foreign Affairs, sought to justify the omission of this important clause by pointing to other pacts which likewise contained no such clause. "We are

blamed," he stated in his speech at the fourth special session of the Supreme Soviet of the U. S. S. R. which met on August 31, 1939, to ratify the pact,

because the pact, if you please, contains no clause providing for its denunciation in case one of the signatories is drawn into war under conditions which might give someone an external pretext to qualify this particular country as an aggressor. But they forget for some reason that such a clause and such a reservation is to be found neither in the Polish-German Nonaggression Pact signed in 1934 and annulled by Germany in 1939 against the wishes of Poland, nor in the Anglo-German declaration on nonaggression signed only a few months ago.

Molotov thus conceded that such a clause had been included in all previous pacts signed by Soviet Russia. Plainly conscious of the weakness of his arguments, however, he added another observation which, in the light of subsequent historical events, was indeed extremely diplomatic.

There are wisecracks who construe from the pact more than is written in it. For this purpose, all kinds of conjectures and hints are mooted about in order to cast doubt on the pact in one country or another. But all this merely speaks for the hopeless impotence of the enemies of the pact!

Another novel feature of this Nonaggression Pact was its seventh and final article which reads: "The present pact is subject to ratification within the shortest possible space of time. The exchange of ratification instruments shall take place in Berlin. *The pact comes into force as soon as it is signed.*" Thus the pact was to take effect not after it was ratified but after it was signed. And yet in all other agreements signed by Soviet Russia, without exception, this point was usually formulated thus: "The agreement comes into effect immediately upon the exchange of instruments of ratification." Certainly Moscow and Berlin had no fear that either the Supreme Soviet or the Reichstag would refuse to ratify the pact. One week would have been sufficient to accomplish this formality. If, nevertheless, both sides wanted the pact to come into effect at once, it was because they did not trust each other. Each feared that in the

course of a few days the other partner might change its decision.

The Soviet Government feared that Hitler, armed with this pact, might renew conversations with England and engineer a new Munich. For Germany, on the other hand, it was necessary for the pact to come into force immediately if she was to be free to commence her long-planned attack upon Poland. Twelve hours after the signing of the pact the fatal coup d'état occurred in Danzig and the Nazi Gauleiter Forster was appointed as "Head of the Danzig State." This act was actually Hitler's declaration of war.

Finally, the treaty in its article 3 contained the obligation of mutual consultation, a clause which became very important in the course of the European war:

The governments of the two contracting powers will in future remain in consultation with one another in order to inform themselves about questions which touch their common interests.

This article was the basis on which all further negotiations between both governments were conducted and public and secret agreements were concluded.

The text of the Commercial Agreement signed on August 19 has never been published. The few details of this agreement that have been made public in either the Soviet or the German press indicated that by it Russia obligated herself to sell to Germany within two years 180,000,000 marks' worth of commodities. Germany, in turn, extended to Russia a credit of 200,000,000 marks at generous terms with interest at 5 per cent, and repayable over a period of seven years. This credit was to be used for Russian purchases in Germany.

Ultimately, this Commercial Agreement remained on paper. When it was originally signed, neither side foresaw the full measure of later military events. Indeed, when the German-Soviet Pact was being discussed, it was believed that the conflict with Poland would perhaps be localized. Its conclusion by no means represented a revolutionary shift in Russo-German trade relations. On the contrary, for an agreement which marked the beginning of intimate

collaboration between two large and powerful countries, its provisions were modest.

Even in peaceful times exports totaling 180,000,000 marks in two years or \$36,000,000 a year would not be excessive. They certainly could not slake Germany's hunger for foodstuffs and raw materials in time of war. In previous years Russian exports to Germany had attained much higher figures. In 1930, for instance, German imports from Russia had amounted to \$106,000,000 in gold, in 1931 to \$72,000,000.<sup>16</sup> In the 1930's Russian exports to Germany fell constantly, until they almost ceased. The growing conflicts between the U. S. S. R. and Hitlerian Germany brought about a complete breakdown in commercial relations between the two countries. In 1935 Soviet exports to Germany were \$57,300,000; in 1936, \$23,300,000; in 1937, \$21,500,000, in 1938 only \$17,700,000, in the first half of 1939 only \$4,535,000.<sup>17</sup>

In the sum total of German imports Russia's share had not been large even before Hitler assumed power (5.8 per cent of Germany's imports in 1932) and after the Nazi ascendancy it fell almost to zero (.9 per cent in 1938). Trade relations between the two countries had practically ceased prior to the signing of the Commercial Agreement of August 19.

By comparison with this state of paralysis, the figures mentioned in the Commercial Agreement certainly represented a considerable improvement in the trade relations between Germany and Russia. In themselves, however, they were negligible.

After the second visit of Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop to Moscow, at the end of September, 1939, negotiations for a new treaty were opened. On February 11, 1940, the new Commercial Agreement was concluded, and on January 10, 1941, it was further supplemented by a third and final wartime trade agreement. In each successive arrangement the volume of goods which Russia bound herself to export to Germany was increased.

The Secret Agreement, or rather the secret agreements, represents the most important aspect of all the pacts signed

in Moscow between Russia and Germany. The fact that such agreements were signed was subsequently admitted officially by Germany; their contents have not yet been published, and much time may elapse before their full details are known. A number of clauses known to have been included in the Russo-German agreements have not as yet been completely revealed. Rumors and conjectures regarding these were published in the London *Daily Express*, among other papers, two days after the pacts were concluded. It reported that the "Secret Soviet-German Agreement" contained the following clauses:

1. The Soviet Union receives freedom of action in the Far East in order to continue its struggle against economic and military aggression in China;
2. Hungary, Rumania, Yugoslavia, and Greece fall within the German sphere of influence; Turkey and Bulgaria within the Russian;
3. The Baltic countries fall within the Russian sphere of influence;
4. Poland is partitioned and the Polish Ukraine is annexed by Russia;
5. Bessarabia is returned to Russia.

The speeches of Hitler and Von Ribbentrop on the day Germany declared war against Russia contain many clues concerning the agreements of 1939. Their statements must be taken with a grain of salt, especially since some of them were falsifications of the true facts (as, for instance, their reference to a written document ostensibly found in the Soviet Legation at Belgrade stating that "the U. S. S. R. would strike a sudden blow against Germany," or the charge that the results of the labors of the British Ambassador to Moscow, Sir Stafford Cripps, were already apparent in the "spring of 1940," whereas Cripps arrived in Moscow only in June, 1940). However, a critical analysis of these speeches supplies a number of valuable data.

At the conclusion of the pacts with Germany [stated Von Ribbentrop], the Soviet Government repeatedly made the declaration that it did not intend to interfere, either directly or indirectly in German affairs . . . The Soviet Government declared that it did not intend to occupy, bolshevize, or annex



any states situated within their sphere of interests other than the territories of the former Polish state . . . No kind of political agitation was to take place beyond the frontiers marking these zones of interest . . .

Bukovina was not mentioned . . . Bulgaria and the two straits were designated as the security zone of the Soviet Union . . .

Regarding the new Polish state, Hitler referred in his speech on October 6 to a *Reststaat*; at that time it was rumored on all sides that Germany was seeking a king for Poland and had offered the crown to Prince Radziwill. In case of a European war "German claims were subject to limitations entirely out of proportion to the achievements of German forces"<sup>18</sup>

In *Failure of a Mission* the former British Ambassador to Berlin, Sir Nevile Henderson, gives some additional data which shed light on the obligations Germany assumed as the price of collaboration with the Soviet Union. "In the event of any modification of territory [in Europe]," Hitler told Henderson on August 29, 1939, "the German Government could neither undertake nor participate in any guarantee without first consulting the U. S. S. R." . . . "The territory of the Polish Corridor [this was one of the sixteen points Hitler offered Henderson at the eleventh hour before the outbreak of hostilities between Germany and Poland] should hold a plebiscite supervised by an international commission composed of representatives of Italy, England, France and Soviet Russia."

A careful analysis of all available evidence indicates that at least one document dealt with the division between Germany and Russia of "spheres of interests" in Eastern Europe. The second pact—or series of agreements\*—determined what type of political action each side should undertake in case of war.

The following nations and areas, according to Hitler and Ribbentrop, were allotted to the Soviet "sphere of interests": Estonia, Latvia, Finland†; Eastern Poland up to the

\* It is possible that some of these agreements were concluded not on August 23 but in the following weeks.

† Louis Fischer insists in the *Nation* of January 6, 1940, that the inclusion of Finland in the Soviet sphere of influence took place at a later date, "The secret Moscow-Berlin

line of demarcation formed by the rivers Narew, Bug, and San (according to some sources), and as far west as the Vistula River where it flows through Warsaw (according to other sources); and Bessarabia, whose occupation by the Red Army was not, however, to assume a warlike character.

Originally Lithuania was to fall within the German sphere of interests. At the beginning of September, however, the Soviet Government made new demands regarding Lithuania, and this country, too, with the exception of a small part, fell within the Soviet sphere.\* Finally, in July, 1940, after the Red Army occupied Lithuania, this part also was conceded to Russia.

Bulgaria and the Dardanelles were designated as a Soviet "security zone." To all appearances, Northern Bukovina was not within the Soviet sphere of interests.

In the pacts of August 23, 1939, and in the course of the following weeks, Germany agreed to consider these territories as outside the sphere of her interests. The other provisions of these secret agreements appear to have been as follows:

1. The Soviet Union received the right to annex Eastern Poland outright and to bolshevize or sovietize those territories as the Kremlin might see fit.
2. In turn Russia agreed not to spread her "propaganda" beyond these newly established borders, that is, the part of Poland which fell within the German sphere. Both powers were to pursue a policy of "peaceful development" of their newly acquired Polish territories.
3. Moscow also agreed not to sovietize any of the nations that fell within her sphere of interests with the exception of the Polish provinces. The political and economic order in those countries was to remain "independent."

agreement of August, 1939, allowed Russia to establish itself in Estonia, Latvia, and in Poland as far west as the Vistula. Part of Warsaw would become Soviet. No mention was then made of Finland. Lithuania fell within the German sphere. It was only much later that Russia and Germany agreed about Finland."

The London *Times* confirmed this later: "Finland was regarded by both governments [German and Soviet] as so obviously within the Soviet sphere of interests that Finland was not discussed during the Soviet-German negotiations" (*Times*, January 6, 1940.)

\* "During our advance in Poland Soviet rulers suddenly claimed Lithuania. I complied with this demand" (Hitler)

4. German inhabitants in the territories occupied by Soviet troops (about 400,000) were to be repatriated. This measure was adopted in order "to remove at the very outset all causes for friction."

5. Russia also promised not to "interfere" in German internal affairs or in the sphere of German interests, although the exact form in which this promise was made is not known. From the German point of view, this meant that the Communist parties in Central and Southeastern Europe would cease their activities, in so far as these parts of Europe were now within the German sphere.

6. It was also agreed (although again the exact form of the agreement is not known) that the Soviet armed forces which would be sent into the territories occupied by Russia were to be limited in number—especially those concentrated on the German borders—and would be intended merely for purposes of occupation and policing. Apparently Germany also agreed to limit the size of her forces along her new border with the Russian sphere.

7. The Franco-Soviet agreement of May 2, 1935, was to be annulled by Russia.

8. Finally, the Soviet Government was assured of participation in the discussion of all European problems, thus removing the threat of a new isolation of Russia and a new Munich.

9. Creation of a small Polish state (in the German sphere) was intended.

In conclusion it should be noted that there is no doubt that during Von Ribbentrop's second visit to Moscow, and particularly in the negotiations between Von der Schulenburg and Molotov, reference was made to the opportunities that would present themselves to the Soviet Union in the Middle East once the British Empire should begin to totter. The repeated statements in the controlled German press regarding Russia's traditional desire to expand toward India were symptomatic. And finally there is no doubt that the Soviet Government listened with interest to these hints which meant "the liberation of the colonial peoples of the East." It is not probable, however,

that Russia was ready to take part in the war on Germany's side to achieve these aims.

### 9. *The Reaction of World Public Opinion*

The reaction of the press, of the diplomats, and of European public opinion toward the Russo-German agreements was one of amazement. In spite of repeated warning, in spite of the fairly exact information in the possession of the European governments, the Moscow agreements struck Europe like a bolt of lightning. They took unawares even the diplomats and their governments. Every interested and disinterested party fell to commenting upon them, and each interpreted them to suit his own purposes. The only essentially correct evaluation came in an official statement from Berlin:

"Europe," the statement said, "is now in the midst of events which will go down in history as the most decisive in our time . . . Every man must understand what it signifies when Germany and Russia direct their foreign policy into traditional channels . . ."

Germany's opponents, however, interpreted the agreements differently and more often than not superficially. The Polish Ambassador in Washington, Count Jerzy Potocki, for instance, said: "I am sure that the Soviet-German Pact is not an aggressive one. This is stressed on information from Warsaw."

The most influential Polish newspaper, *Kurjer Warszawski*, declared on August 24 that the agreement was a sign of German weakness. A European diplomat who did not disclose his name stated on the same day in the Russian *Posledniya Novosti* of Paris that "this event astonished us all; however, pacts in our days have little value." According to the official organ of the Vatican, *Osservatore Romano*, there was no point "in attributing too much significance to the pact, it was merely one move in a game of chess on the part of Soviet Russia "

From Washington the foreign correspondents reported on the American attitude toward the pact. "In circles close

to the State Department it is believed that the agreement is not very significant and that von Ribbentrop's trip to Moscow was only a bluff." Several hours after the pact was officially announced the official French news agency, Havas, sought to calm public opinion by insisting that "the agreement will have a clause, as in all other agreements signed by Moscow, that in case one of the signatories commits an act of aggression against a third power the other signatory has a right to denounce the pact." Several hours later the text of the pact was published without the clause.

The London *Times* had this to say: "Germany's aim is to interrupt the conversations that are now going on between Moscow, Paris and London. They will continue." What utterly fantastic meaning was read into the pact can be seen from the report of one news agency (Fournier, Paris) which stated that "Ribbentrop obligated himself to aid Chang Kai-shek against Japan"; and the influential French newspaper *Paris Midi* even reported that Russia would participate actively in Germany's military operations.

When Moscow decided to postpone the ratification of the agreement for three days so that it would coincide with the German ratification (the Reichstag had been summoned for August 31) the incorrigible optimists were once more elated. On August 30 the *Daily Telegraph* published a report from Moscow to the effect that the Soviet Government had intentionally postponed the ratification of the agreement so that if war should break out in the meantime, it would be able—should Russia find it necessary—to reverse its stand. But on the very next day the pact was ratified and only after that did hostilities break out.

The greatest confusion of all reigned in the circles of European and American Communists. At first the New York *Daily Worker* decided not to mention the agreement at all, awaiting no doubt a reply to its query to Moscow. Then Earl Browder, the Secretary and official leader of the Communist party of the U. S. A., stated on August 24 that "the pact weakens Hitler. If Germany should invade Po-

land, the Soviet Union will undoubtedly adhere to her policy of aiding any nation whose independence is jeopardized by an aggression." This was also the refrain of the two French Communist dailies, *Ce-Soir* and *Humanité*:

"Hitler had to bow before the might of the Soviet Union . . . It is imperative to speed up the signing of the Franco-British-Soviet military agreement!" Under the circumstances the French Communists would continue to back France.

When two or three days after the signing of the secret agreements more or less authentic information regarding them was published in the English press Germany hastened to deny their authenticity. The official *Deutsches Nachrichten Büro* stated:

"The information published in the *Daily Express* concerning a secret protocol attached to the German-Soviet agreement is a transparent maneuver designed to aggravate the present political situation and to frighten the neutral countries."

At this moment Germany still hoped to localize her coming conflict with Poland. In Berlin, Rome, and Moscow they were convinced that with the signing of the Russo-German agreement this aim had been achieved. Moscow and Berlin believed that they had succeeded in averting a European war!

The Moscow press declared on August 24, half jestingly and half for diplomacy's sake, that "the establishment of friendly relations between the two powers will have a calming effect upon the tense international situation and will help strengthen the cause of peace." As usual in such cases, the last statement was only partly true. For Moscow seriously believed that, because of the new situation, the Western Powers would now refrain from going to war over Poland. The *New York Times*, for instance, reported from Rome on August 25: "They argue here that Great Britain and France will back out of fulfilling their pledge to Poland." Sir Nevile Henderson reported similar sentiments in Berlin: "The conclusion of the pact meant that peace was assured since Britain would not, it was told, fight for Danzig or Poland without Russian aid."<sup>19</sup>

## CHAPTER IV

### *POLAND AND THE BALTIC STATES*

#### *I. Confusion in Moscow*

AS far as Russia was concerned, everything hinged on the one question: Would the Western Powers enter the war? Moscow, as a matter of fact, even more than Berlin, anticipated a new appeasement move on the part of England and France. In spite of its vast intelligence system, Moscow completely misjudged European events. The Kremlin possessed a great deal of information but not correct judgment. So the Russians were caught completely off guard when England and France declared war on Germany three days after Hitler attacked Poland.

The Havas correspondent in the Soviet capital reported the same thing; Russians laughed and shrugged their shoulders when foreigners told them that the British and French would fight. "The news of the war," reported the Moscow correspondent of the London *Daily Telegraph*, "astonished the Russians. They expected a compromise."

*Posledniya Novosti* carried the following account from Moscow:<sup>1</sup>

Events in Europe have completely stupefied the Russian people. Up to September 1 everyone in the Kremlin was certain that the democracies would not declare war on Germany; that they would capitulate to Hitler; and that the German-Polish conflict would end in a conference patterned after Munich. Hence they considered it advantageous to be on the side of the strong rather than the weak. Molotov and particularly Zhdanov had no doubt but that the new European conflict would result in another bloodless victory for Hitler and Von Ribbentrop.

The Soviet Envoy to Poland, Sharonov, visited the Polish Foreign Minister, Beck, on September 2, at the very moment when German troops were invading Poland but

while the war in the West was still a day off. Apparently at the instructions of Moscow, Sharonov inquired why Poland was not negotiating with Russia regarding supplies.<sup>2</sup> Beck was not a little surprised at this strange inquiry. He at once instructed the Polish Envoy to Moscow, Grzybowski, to ask for a clarification of the Soviet proposal. By the time Grzybowski got to see Molotov, however, England and France had already declared war, and the Soviet Premier and Commissar for Foreign Affairs had already assumed a different tone. Grzybowski reported his conversation with Molotov to Beck on September 8:

Sharonov's suggestions are no longer opportune. Molotov has informed me that the intervention of Great Britain and France has created an entirely new situation. At present the Soviets must remain *outside the conflict* . . . For us, said Molotov, Poland is now synonymous with England.

Grzybowski also inquired about the possibility of procuring raw materials and other supplies in Russia. Molotov replied that Russia could deliver only orders already placed, and that military materials could not be supplied at all since their transit might be in contradiction to the Soviet-German agreement.

Gradually the clouds of war were thickening over neutral Moscow. On September 7 an order was issued for a mobilization covering the Ukraine, White Russia, and four other military districts. This mobilization was not announced officially and was not mentioned by the press. But the news spread rapidly among the people, and the secrecy with which it was carried out enhanced the anxiety of the Russians. There was, for some reason, a general belief that Russia was about to enter the war against Germany, since no Russian, with the exception of the small group in the Kremlin, could conceive of his country fighting against any other power.

A wartime atmosphere pervaded the country. People began feverishly to stock up on foodstuffs and soon most of the consumer goods had disappeared from the stores. Savings-bank deposits were being withdrawn. An order of the Commissariat of Internal Affairs to "crack down" on



hoarders and to prosecute "speculators who seek to profit from the war" as usual in such circumstances merely increased their activities.\* Even in the ranks of the Soviet Communist party there was much confusion. Few of its members were aware that the Kremlin had laid its plans for a large-scale military and diplomatic campaign. Collaboration with Germany was generally discounted. On the other hand, the passivity of the Soviet rulers in the face of the "struggle against Fascism" that was now going on was as incomprehensible in Russia as it was abroad. It was against these mute inquiries that Molotov thundered when he denounced with scorn those "people who refuse to see farther than their noses and who let themselves be taken prisoner by mere anti-Fascist propaganda."

Only gradually did the Soviet press begin to accustom itself to the situation and to adopt the tone which it then kept until June, 1941. News about internal conditions in Germany disappeared from the pages of Soviet newspapers and the Nazi neighbor was no longer an object of criticism. Reporting assiduously the tragic economic conditions in the belligerent and even neutral countries, Russian newspapers maintained a strict silence on Germany. Occasionally Soviet magazines gave facts about the activities of Communist parties in other countries, but almost nothing about the German Communist party. Favorite slogans such as "warmongers" were aimed solely against Germany's enemies. Outwardly, the Soviet press maintained a correct attitude toward Germany: "We must live in peace with our great neighbor" seemed to be its unspoken motif.

This special tone of neutral Moscow was not adopted at once but developed gradually. While mobilization was still in progress, between September 7 and 16, military reports in the Soviet newspapers were extremely limited. Most of their space was still being devoted to minor internal questions. But as military preparations were about to be concluded, the press began to prepare public opinion

\* In his speech of September 17, 1939, Molotov declared: "Because the government has called in our army reserves some people have decided that the time has come to hoard foodstuffs and other commodities. I am afraid that this hoarding of food and other commodities will harm only those who indulge in it . . ."

for the shock of coming events. On September 14 the first articles concerning Poland were published widely in the Soviet newspapers. A careful analysis of these shows that their aim was to create a definite impression upon the Russian masses, and undoubtedly upon the rest of the world. They were designed to suggest that Soviet Russia had no intention either of fighting or of extending her territories, and her pact with Germany gave her a guarantee of peace; but the rapid "disintegration of the Polish state," unexpected even to Russia, forced the Soviets to consider the fate of neighboring territories, particularly of their "blood-brothers, the White Russians and Ukrainians" inhabiting Eastern Poland.

The intentions and plans of the Soviet Government were cloaked in complete secrecy. Few people realized that the mobilization was but a prelude to more aggressive action on the part of Russia, the plan for which, worked out beforehand, was based on the Russo-German Pact.

As soon as her mobilization was completed, Russia embarked upon diplomatic and military action. One of the most feverish periods in the operation of Soviet foreign policy opened on September 17, when Moscow broke officially and unceremoniously with Poland. On September 23 Soviet troops approached the borders of Estonia and on the 26th those of Latvia. The Kremlin at once began diplomatic conversations with the governments of these countries. After Estonia and Latvia came the turn of Lithuania and Finland. It was also assumed that the question of Bessarabia would be settled just as speedily, certainly before the close of 1939.

## 2. *The Partition of Poland*

The criticism of the policy of the Polish Government toward her numerous and large national minorities—a criticism which had been carried on in the Soviet press over a period of years—served to justify the radical measures which the U. S. S. R. now took against the Polish state.

During 1918-20, following the restoration of Polish independence by the Treaty of Versailles, the young Polish

Republic extended its territory far beyond its original ethnographical borders. In April, 1920, Poland attacked Soviet Russia and after a war that lasted six months an armistice was concluded in October; the peace treaty was signed in Riga on March 18, 1921. Poland obtained vast Russian territories which extended beyond the line of demarcation (the so-called Curzon Line) set for Poland by England in 1920. These Russian territories came to be known as *Kresy Wschodnie*.

In the *Kresy* the Poles constituted a minority, in some parts a very insignificant one. Yet these eastern provinces comprised 32 per cent of the territory of the Polish state. Their population of 10 millions was mostly Ukrainians, White Russians, and Jews. As a result, this large state with a population of 34,000,000 even according to official Polish statistics counted only 23,000,000 Poles or 68 per cent of the entire population. According to other sources there were only 20,000,000 Poles living in the Polish Republic. During the two decades of Polish independence this large group of non-Poles was in constant conflict with the Polish state and was a perpetual source of irritation to the Polish Government.

Soviet military action began on September 17—two weeks after war was declared by the Western Powers. Russia had required that much time to complete her mobilization. At five o'clock in the morning of September 17 Soviet troops crossed the Polish frontier all the way from Latvia to Rumania. Two hours earlier Potemkin, the Vice-Commissar of Foreign Affairs, had summoned the Polish Ambassador, Grzybowski, and handed him a note stating that Russia was breaking off relations with the "disintegrated Polish state." Grzybowski refused to take cognizance of that communication. At four o'clock in the morning Molotov informed the German Ambassador that Red troops were crossing the Polish border. Later on the same day, commenting on this note in a speech, Molotov gave what is by now the classic explanation of Russia's action toward Poland:

One cannot expect the Soviet Government to remain indifferent to the fate of our kindred Ukrainians and White Russians in-

habiting Poland, whose status heretofore was that of nations without any rights and who are at present subjected to the will of chance. The Soviet Government deems it its sacred duty to extend a helping hand to our Brother Ukrainians and Brother White Russians who live in Poland.

Molotov's note to the Polish Ambassador said virtually the same thing and in practically the same words: ". . . the Polish state and its government have, in fact, ceased to exist. Therefore the agreements concluded between the U. S. S. R. and Poland have ceased to operate." Referring to the "kindred Ukrainian and White Russian people, who live on Polish territory and who are at the mercy of fate," he informed the Polish Ambassador that "under these circumstances, the Soviet Government has directed the High Command of the Red Army to order the troops to cross the frontier and to take under their protection the life and property of the population of Western White Russia."

It should be noted here that Molotov's note ended with a reference not only to the Ukrainians and White Russians but to the Polish people themselves. "At the same time the Soviet Government proposes to take all measures to extricate the Polish people from the unfortunate war into which they were dragged by their unwise leaders, and to enable them to live a peaceful life." In subsequent statements this reference to the Polish people was omitted. Apparently it referred to the more westerly line of demarcation originally agreed upon, which would have included in the territories that fell to Russia large areas of compact Polish population. The Russo-German frontier in Poland was later drawn much farther toward the east.

On the same day, September 17, in an extremely curt note presented to all the foreign representatives stationed in Moscow, Molotov declared that Russia did not intend to become involved in the European war. "I have the honor to inform you," the note stated, "that the U. S. S. R. intends to pursue a policy of neutrality."

All these actions of the Soviet Government, which were certainly unexpected to the people of Russia and which shook world public opinion, could, of course, be interpreted variously. They were indeed interpreted and rein-

terpreted almost endlessly. Some observers foretold the possibility of Russia joining the war against the Western countries on the side of Germany. Others, on the contrary, anticipated that once the Red Army encountered the German forces in Poland a struggle would ensue. The deep secrecy surrounding the new partition of Poland added to the confusion, which was further confounded by Molotov's short note on Soviet neutrality and by the joint Soviet-German declaration issued the following day, September 18. That declaration read as follows:

In order to avoid unfounded rumors concerning the aims pursued by Soviet and German forces now in Poland, the Government of the U. S. S. R. and the Government of Germany declare that neither of the troops pursue aims contrary to the interests of Germany or the Soviet Union or contrary to the spirit and letter of the pact of nonaggression signed between Germany and the U. S. S. R. On the contrary, the aim of these troops is to restore order in Poland, disturbed by the disintegration of the Polish state, and to assist the Polish population in the reconstruction of its national existence.

The reaction to Russia's invasion of Poland was almost identical in all countries except those which adhered to the Axis. Even the staid London *Times* on this occasion employed rather sharp words. "To the Soviet," said the *Times* of September 18, 1939, "belongs the base and despicable share of accessory before and after the crime and the contempt which even the thief has for a receiver who shares none of his original risks." Despite this moral indignation, however, the consequences of Russia's action were not altogether clear. Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, for instance, stated cautiously on September 20 that "it is too early to pronounce any final verdict on the motives or consequences of the Russian action, but for the unhappy victim of that cynical attack the result has been a tragedy of the grimmest character."

Even greater was the confusion that existed in Soviet Russia and in the ranks of the Red Army itself. Beginning September 18, meetings were held "spontaneously" in all cities, towns, factories, and collective farms. As usual, the sympathy of the participants was assured, and the resolu-

tions passed were approved beforehand by the proper authorities; thus it is impossible to judge the sentiments of the Russian people by these resolutions. As a rule they were merely variations on Molotov's speech of September 17. In reporting the meetings the Soviet press quoted slogans contained in these resolutions,

"We shall rescue our oppressed brothers."

"Our sacred duty is to aid our oppressed brothers."

"The great Soviet people extends a brotherly and helping hand to the oppressed peoples of Western White Russia and Western Ukraine."

"The Polish *Pans* oppressed, exploited, and Polonized by force and coercion the national minorities, especially the Ukrainians and White Russians."

On its march into Poland the Red Army was completely ignorant of its final destination. Many in its ranks were under the impression that they were on their way to fight the Germans. To add to the confusion, Soviet airplanes were dropping leaflets in Polish informing the population that the "Red Army comes as a friend and not as an enemy—as the liberator of the oppressed masses." The entire Russian march into Poland lasted only a few days. Polish military resistance was weak, and victories were won at little cost. The best testimony to this effect is the losses suffered by the Russians in the course of the invasion: 737 killed and 1,862 wounded.<sup>3</sup> The German armies, which in their first advance had gone beyond the line of demarcation, were now retiring, having first made the eastern provinces of Poland secure for the Red Army. The Soviet press preferred not to mention this, but the evident military collaboration between Germany and Russia made a strong impression on the outside world.

Five days after the Red Army invaded Poland, Russia and Germany announced the demarcation of their new frontier in Poland. It followed the rivers San, Vistula, and Pisa, and cut the city of Warsaw in two. Had this first frontier been left in force, Russia would have received in addition to Western White Russia and Western Ukraine, a large territory populated by Poles, and the purely Polish population would have been divided between Russia and

Germany. This frontier, which had been agreed upon before Russia invaded Poland, was to a certain degree based on the former, pre-1914 boundary between the two countries. On the basis of the new frontier, Germany was to receive the smaller part of Poland (about one-third) but more than she had dominated prior to 1914. On the other hand, of former Austrian Poland, Eastern Galicia was to go to Russia. In effect, Germany was thus exchanging Austrian Eastern Galicia for Russian Poland, including such large cities as Warsaw, Lodz, and others, lying beyond her pre-1914 borders.

On September 23 the official *Dienst aus Deutschland*, in referring to the new frontier in "former Poland," mentioned that "an agreement about the line of demarcation was already in existence when the Government of the U. S. S. R. gave the order to the Red Army to cross the borders." Only certain details had to be decided upon during the military conversations in Moscow. "Details relative to the transfer of certain areas remained to be worked out during the conversations that took place between Germany and Soviet officers," stated the *Völkischer Beobachter* on September 24, 1939. "These conversations lasted only a short time—not days but hours. In the meantime the exchange of territories occupied hitherto by German troops continued in a comradely atmosphere."

This agreement on the new frontier did not last long. In the midst of the Russian campaign in Poland a new exchange of territories took place. Germany conceded Lithuania to Russia, although according to the agreement of August 23 Lithuania lay within the German sphere of interest; and received in return, according to some sources, an additional strip of Polish territory to the east of the line of demarcation previously arranged.<sup>4</sup> Now the frontier followed the rivers Pisa, Bug, and San, about 70 to 100 miles east of Warsaw. The additional Polish territory which now fell to Germany contains about 5,000,000 inhabitants.

The territory acquired by Russia represented an ethnic unit, but from a strategic point of view, according to many military experts, Germany had the advantage.<sup>5</sup> The wedge-

shaped Suwalki district, for instance, which fell to Germany now was militarily of great importance and was to play its role at the start of the German offensive in June, 1941. The U. S. S. R. received in all 76,500 square miles, with a population of 12,800,000. Of these more than 7,000,000 were Ukrainians, 3,000,000 White Russians, more than a million Poles, and about a million Jews. The Soviet Ukraine received 35,000 square miles of territory with a population of 8,000,000; Soviet White Russia, 41,500 square miles with a population of 4,800,000.

On October 22, "elections" to the "People's Assemblies" took place in the provinces ceded to Russia. According to official Soviet information, more than 90 per cent of the eligible voters cast their ballots. In Western Ukraine 4,434,000, or 92.9 per cent of the eligible voters, participated in the elections. The official candidates approved by Moscow ran on a single ticket as the "candidates of social organizations" and received 90.9 per cent of the total vote cast. Thus 9 per cent of the voters opposed the official candidates—a proportion which is not negligible under the conditions. The picture is similar in White Russia where 2,672,000—96.7 per cent of the voters—participated in the elections. The official candidates received 90.7 per cent of the total vote cast, with 9 per cent voting against them.

Four days after the elections the "People's Assembly" of Western Ukraine passed a resolution requesting the Soviet Government to incorporate their territory into the U. S. S. R. and to confiscate all land, banks, and large industries. A similar resolution was passed on October 29 by the Assembly of White Russia, and on November 1 the Supreme Soviet of the U. S. S. R. "recommended" that these requests be granted and that the eastern provinces of Poland be incorporated into the U. S. S. R. Thus the fate of the eastern parts of Poland became, for a period, strictly a matter of internal Soviet politics.

### 3. *The Apex of Russo-German Friendship*

At no time since the war began were relations between Russia and Germany so friendly as during Von Ribben-



trop's second visit to Moscow, on September 27-28, 1939. This was the high point in their relationship. It was the moment when the whole world was aghast at Germany's military might. The conquest of Poland in fifteen to twenty days was a triumph for Hitler. At the same time the bloodless expansion of Soviet territory seemed to justify Stalin's policy and reconciled many within Russia who had been doubtful at first of the wisdom of the Soviet-German Non-aggression Pact. Thus far the results achieved by the pact were indeed brilliant. Hitler's star was at its zenith but Stalin's star, too, shone brightly.

The arrangements for Von Ribbentrop's second arrival in Moscow on September 27 resembled those of a triumphal procession. When the German Foreign Minister with his suite landed at the Sokolniki airdrome the Soviet band struck up the *Internationale*. The German guests stood at attention. Next came the *Horst-Wessel Song* (the Nazis' gory anti-Communist anthem) and foreigners present noticed that the Moscow band played it without a single slip. Ribbentrop had brought Molotov's wife, Mrs. Zhemchuzhina, a present from Hitler, a Mercedes automobile, of the best German make. Zhemchuzhina took this occasion to thank him appropriately, "I like Herr Hitler's present much better than the one the French gave," she said. "The French presented me with a Sevres vase, and I had to give it to a museum."

To please Stalin, Ribbentrop had learned by heart a few verses of a poem by the famous twelfth-century Georgian poet, Rustavelli. At the triumphal breakfast that followed at the Kremlin with Stalin present, Herr von Ribbentrop, between bites of *shashlyk* and gulps of Georgian wine, displayed his knowledge of Georgian poetry. In between the business conversations that now followed there was also the customary visit to the opera and joint posing for photographs. As a mark of esteem for the honored guest, the Moscow radio refrained on that day from broadcasting Communist propaganda in German.

In taking leave of his hosts on September 29, Herr von Ribbentrop expressed his regret that his visit had been so brief. "The next time," he said, "I hope to remain longer."

As he was entering his plane the Soviet guard of honor raised their right hands in an imitation of the Hitler salute.

This external display of pomp heightened the effect of the decisions which were reached between the two governments. In conversations between Stalin, Molotov, and Von Ribbentrop the Russo-German frontier was finally fixed. They also agreed on economic collaboration and on a joint "peace offensive," which in fact proposed to Great Britain and France that they end their war against Germany at once.

The "Treaty of Mutual Friendship and Convention on the Subject of Frontiers" signed by Von Ribbentrop during his visit to Moscow is the chief document dealing with the partition of Poland, and the most important feature of this short agreement was the map which supplemented the description of the new frontier. It is interesting to note that this agreement, too, which was to be subject to later ratification, entered into effect "from the moment of its signature," in order to enable both countries to begin at once the "necessary state reconstruction" of their newly acquired Polish territories. This agreement was ratified only three weeks later and by that time the "state reconstruction" was well under way.

It is also interesting to note the terminology employed in the agreement. Obviously referring to the secret understanding of August 23, it speaks not of the *frontier* of both states but of "their respective state interests in the territory of the former Polish state."\* Finally in article 2 there is threatening reference to England and France: "Both countries recognize as final the frontier between their respective state interests, as set forth in article 1, and will resist any interference with this decision on the part of other powers "

This wording represents the essence of Berlin's foreign policy at that period: the organization of Eastern Europe

\* "Sphere of interests" is a special term which Hitler employed extensively in the Russo-German relations. It had a broader implication than the term "State", the Baltic States, for instance, retained their sovereignty while falling within the Soviet sphere of interests. At this stage there was still some talk of leaving Poland as an independent state within the German sphere of interests.

is the exclusive concern of Germany and Soviet Russia; the war of the Western Powers against Germany should be ended at once. The West, in other words, must accept as a *fait accompli* the state and territorial revisions brought about by Germany and Russia in the East. Hence the joint declaration published on September 28 under the signatures of Von Ribbentrop and Molotov:

After the Government of the German Reich and the Government of the Soviet Socialist Republics have definitely settled by the treaty signed today the question resulting from the disintegration of the Polish state, thus creating a safe foundation for lasting peace in Eastern Europe, they unanimously express the opinion that it would correspond to the true interests of all people to make an end to the war existing between Germany on the one hand and England and France on the other hand. Therefore, both governments, if necessary in conjunction with one of the friendly nations, will direct their joint efforts toward carrying out this aim as soon as possible.

Then follows a threat:

But should the efforts of both governments fail, then the fact would be established that England and France are responsible for the continuation of the war, and in case of continuation of the war the Governments of Germany and Soviet Russia will consult each other regarding the necessary measures.

Nothing concrete was meant by the word "consult" in this instance and it carried with it no obligation for either side. Germany, undoubtedly, would have preferred a more direct threat by Russia, but Moscow, for all its collaboration with Berlin, did not want to become involved in war on Germany's side and preferred to maintain its own brand of neutrality. The promise to "consult" was merely a compromise.

For Germany this joint declaration was of great value. Immediately following its publication the Communist parties of the various anti-Nazi countries began a widespread campaign for immediate peace. On October 4 the Communist party of Great Britain issued a strongly worded proclamation calling for immediate "negotiations for the restoration of peace in Europe." The French Communist

party worked in the same direction. The ground having been thus prepared, Hitler was able to propose in the Reichstag on October 6 the summoning of a peace conference.

Additional weight was given to Germany's call to end the war by the new trade agreement also signed on September 28 between Von Ribbentrop and Molotov. In a letter from Molotov to Von Ribbentrop the Soviet Government, "relying on the general political understanding reached and in its spirit," was "ready to develop with all means economic relations and the exchange of goods between Germany and Soviet Russia."\* A new economic program was to be drafted, with Russia supplying Germany with raw materials for which Germany was to compensate her by industrial deliveries "stretched out over a long period of time." Moreover, this program was to be so carried out "that the German-Soviet exchange of goods should again reach the maximum level of the past."

The most interesting point in this letter was the reference to German industrial deliveries "stretched out over a long period of time." This obviously meant a delay in German payment for Soviet exports. Unexpectedly then, Soviet Russia became the creditor, whereas Germany, whose export surpluses were, because of the war, rather limited, became the debtor. Apparently Russia was thus to repay Germany for her acquisition of Eastern Poland.

Subsequently, drawing a balance sheet of Russo-German relations during that period, Molotov intimated that what Russia needed was a strong Germany: "We were always of the opinion that a strong Germany is a necessary prerequisite for the preservation of a stable peace in Europe. An attempt at another Versailles in the present international situation may end in a complete crash."<sup>6</sup>

Regardless of the contents of this or any other specific document, the Moscow conference, following as it did the liquidation of Poland, the joint declaration to the belligerent powers, and the display of economic collaboration in defiance of the British blockade, gave the impression to

\* Judging by the Germanisms in the officially published Russian text the documents were prepared by the Germans and proposed to Molotov for signature.

the outside world that Russo-German military collaboration was now a fact. Indeed, Von Ribbentrop sought beyond doubt to create abroad the impression that Germany and Russia were now bound together by a military alliance, with strictly defined roles assigned to each partner. Elsewhere, Russia was beginning to be considered more and more as part of the German pattern of things. Her much-advertised "anti-Fascism" was now regarded as camouflage. The assumption grew and flourished that she might any day join the Axis, and that a common program for a "new partition of the world into spheres of interest" would unite Japan, Italy, Germany, and Russia against the old empires, Great Britain, France, the United States, and Holland. Germany, on her part, encouraged such speculations and theories, based on the impressions which the outside world had gained during the honeymoon of Russo-German friendship.

#### 4. *The Baltic Campaign*

Soviet Russia opened her diplomatic offensive against the Baltic countries simultaneously with the advance of the Red Army into Poland. On September 18, the day following the invasion of Poland, Tass released a significant but puzzling communication to the effect that, "according to trustworthy sources, Polish submarines have taken refuge in naval bases belonging to Baltic States with the connivance of the ruling circles," and that one submarine interned in Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, had disappeared. "It is believed that this was another case of negligence on the part of the Estonian authorities."\* This communication was the signal for Russia's diplomatic and military campaign in the Baltic.

The speed with which the Kremlin undertook to solve a number of knotty problems in the second half of September was caused by the progress of the German campaign in Poland. The war was rapidly coming to its close, and Germany was offering peace to the Western Powers. Russia, who now aided Germany in this "peace offensive,"

\* The Estonian authorities denied this allegation.

was not at all certain but that Hitler's offer would be accepted. The revision of the frontiers in Eastern Europe had to be speeded up so that the coming European Peace Conference would be faced with a *fait accompli*.

The Russian Baltic campaign differed from that in Poland in every respect. According to Molotov's agreement with Germany, Latvia and Estonia, although within the Soviet "sphere of interests," were not to be sovietized. Their social and economic order was to remain untouched. In general, it was not within the realm of possibility for Russia to annex these states outright, as it had done in the case of Eastern Poland. But Moscow was to be permitted to send troops into their territories, a factor which was extremely valuable strategically for her. Stalin must have taken a grim pleasure in exercising this right. Only three months before these two states, to avoid an agreement with Russia and Great Britain, had run to Hitler's arms and had protested loudly against a guarantee of their borders which would be "tantamount to aggression." Now, in reply to panicky reminders from Tallinn and Riga of their pacts, Hitler merely shrugged his shoulders and advised his "kindred" Germans to leave these states as quickly as possible.

Within Russia the invasion of the Baltic, coming as it did after the acquisitions in Poland, was an ace in the hands of the Soviet Government. In the eyes of the non-Communist intelligentsia, to whom Bolshevism had formerly been a symptom of weakness and national disintegration, these territorial gains which restored the frontiers of the Czarist Empire became an argument in favor of the Soviet Government. Stalin could now safely assume the role which he had long coveted of a "Communist Peter the Great." Like Peter he was a ruler who could combine radical internal reforms with territorial expansion achieved by a harsh and unwavering policy. Stalin's successes made a strong impression not only within Russia but even among Russian political emigrants abroad.

The main difficulty which presented itself at this time was one of secondary importance: How was this military venture into the Baltic States to be explained officially to

the world at large? In terms of strategy, it could be directed against but one country, the state which dominated the Baltic Sea, Germany. The occupation of the Baltic countries could have no other military significance. But these were the honeymoon months of Russo-German friendship. Moscow therefore had to indulge in considerable hypocrisy and to employ such feeble excuses as the argument that it was imperative to defend Estonia and Latvia as well as the Baltic shores of the Soviet Union against British aggression. "Basing itself on Estonian territory, the British fleet attempted in 1919 to attack Kronstadt. In the postwar years the British fleet held maneuvers every summer in the Baltic Sea, and there were even negotiations regarding the sale of the Estonian island of Oesel to England."<sup>7</sup>

Germany echoed Russia's complaints. Employing the same hypocritical excuses, she pointed to England as responsible for Russia's invasion of the Baltic countries. For Germany, to be sure, the loss of these advance posts of her influence in the Baltic was a grievous blow. But for the moment she had to keep a straight face. The *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* recalled to mind that in 1925 Great Britain had sought to gain influence in the Baltic, but "now the right to settle all questions concerning the Baltic is in the hands of the Baltic nations." *Pravda* of course cheerfully reproduced this "convincing argument."<sup>8</sup>

### *Estonia*

The official Soviet report that Polish submarines were operating in Baltic waters from Estonian bases was one of the danger signals which brought the Estonian Foreign Minister, Karl Selter, to Moscow, ostensibly for "trade negotiations." Actually the negotiations had little to do with trade. On September 25, after only two days in Moscow, Selter returned to Tallinn, accompanied by a number of representatives of the Estonian Legation. The threat of an immediate break with the Russian colossus hung over the little Baltic Republic. On the 26th new detachments of the Red Army were moved up to the Estonian border, and the next day Selter again hurried to Moscow, this time

bringing with him the assent of his government to the conclusion of a Russo-Estonian Pact of "mutual assistance."

The French magazine, *Le Match*, gave a graphic description of Selter's second trip to Moscow: On landing at the Moscow airdrome he discovered that only a minor official of the Narkomindel, a certain Vasiukov, was on hand to welcome him. Selter asked after the Estonian Minister to Russia, who was supposed to be there. After twenty minutes he was informed by telephone that the Minister had been detained about two miles from the airdrome and that his documents were being examined. In the company of Vasiukov Selter went to the Narkomindel. Here, too, he was received not by Molotov or even his assistant but by a secondary official named Zhelezniak.<sup>9</sup>

"There will be no preliminary conversations," Zhelezniak informed Selter curtly. "You have the Soviet proposals and there can be only one answer: Yes or no. Molotov will receive you this evening, and you must be ready with the answer."

That evening Molotov received the Estonian Foreign Minister. He confirmed the Soviet demands and added that at any moment Soviet airplanes might fly over Estonian territory and should they be fired on, Estonian fortresses would at once be subjected to bombardment.

On the following day, September 28, the Soviet-Estonian Pact of Mutual Assistance was signed. This was the first of a series of similar pacts which were eventually signed between Russia and the small Baltic States.

As formulated by Moscow, this pact was an extension of the friendly relations established between Russia and Estonia by the Peace Treaty of February 2, 1920. The two contracting parties undertook "to render each other every assistance, including military assistance, in the event of direct aggression or a threat of aggression arising on the part of any great European power against the sea frontiers of the contracting parties on the Baltic Sea or against their land frontiers across the territory of the Latvian Republic." Estonia was not obligated to come to Russia's assistance in case the Soviets became involved in a military conflict with Japan, Rumania, or any other power. Only in



case of war with Germany on land or with the fleet of some large power at sea was Estonia bound to come to Russia's aid. Estonia further granted the Soviet Union the right to maintain naval bases and several military flying fields on a number of her islands, leased at reasonable terms, as well as to maintain at the expense of the Soviet Union "land and air armed forces of strictly limited strength."

Particularly significant from the Estonian point of view was article 5 of the pact which read in part: "The fulfillment of this pact must not affect in any measure the sovereign rights of the contracting parties, in particular their economic systems and state organizations."

At the same time Estonia also signed a trade agreement with Russia which provided for an increase in trade between the two countries to four and one-half times the existing volume, or about 39,000,000 Estonian crowns.<sup>10</sup>

These agreements with Estonia were signed by Russia the same day that Molotov signed the second agreement with Von Ribbentrop. The Soviet press commented upon them widely, emphasizing the clause on the respect for Estonian sovereignty and the inviolability of Estonia's economic and social system. The Kremlin's promise not to sovietize or communize Estonia, which provoked much astonishment both in and out of Communist ranks, was hailed by the Russian press as a further proof of the Soviet's belief in the principles of independence and national self-determination.

Aggression and the desire to oppress smaller nations are alien to the spirit of the U. S. S. R. The Soviet people is interested in lasting peace and in fraternal collaboration with other peoples. Such collaboration can be realized only if it is based on mutual trust and the principle of noninterference in each other's internal affairs. Because it respects the sovereignty of other states, the Soviet Union does not interfere in their internal affairs.<sup>11</sup>

Such was Russia's official explanation of the pact. The reaction of the Estonian press was similarly veiled. Estonia was on the brink of disaster; no one actually believed that with Soviet troops on its territory it would remain sovereign for long. Nevertheless the Estonian press was com-

pelled, officially at least, to express elation at the outcome of the Moscow negotiations and to assure the Estonian people that Soviet intentions were strictly honorable.

. . . The forces of the Soviet Union [wrote *Piavalekht* October 17] do not come to Estonia for the purpose of establishing a protectorate. Nor do they come to us to change our social and economic system, or to spread new doctrines in our territory. Rumors to this effect are categorically denied by the Soviet agency as absurd and false.

In the meantime Moscow was already carrying on conversations with Latvia, and under the circumstances the Latvian newspapers reported the Soviet-Estonian Pact under headlines that smacked of forced enthusiasm: "The Soviet Union fully recognizes the sovereignty of the Baltic States," "The Baltic States can view their future optimistically," and so forth

Finally, Karl Selter himself delivered a speech in which he stated that Estonia had no reason to fear the Soviet Union. Rumors that Estonia no longer existed as an independent state he denounced as nonsense and pure invention. On October 15 eleven Soviet warships dropped anchor in the port of Tallinn, and detachments of Soviet troops landed on Estonian territory.

### *Latvia*

Latvia's turn came after the agreements with Germany and Estonia had been signed, and Ribbentrop and Selter had departed from Moscow. Quite simply the Riga government was ordered to send its representatives. Inasmuch as both Riga and Moscow had now had experience in negotiations of this sort, it did not take them long to reach an agreement. Everything was prepared in advance. The terms of the agreement were almost identical with those imposed on Estonia. The comments of the press and the reaction of world public opinion also followed a similar pattern.

The Latvian Foreign Minister, Munters, arrived in Moscow on October 2 and was met at the airfield by the Acting

Commissar for Foreign Affairs, S. Lozovsky. This time the airport was decorated with Soviet and Latvian banners. Unlike the Estonian Minister, Munters negotiated directly with Stalin and Molotov; after two days of negotiation the agreements were signed.

At their first meeting Molotov handed Munters an ultimatum giving him forty-eight hours to reach a decision. In case the Soviet proposals were rejected, the ultimatum stated, Russia would take all necessary measures. There could be little doubt as to the nature of the "necessary measures," since the conversations were carried on in the presence of Marshal Voroshilov and the Chief of the Soviet General Staff, Shaposhnikov. Munters attempted to bargain and negotiations continued for another hour. An officer then entered the conference room and announced the arrival of the members of the Defense Council who had been "invited to discuss guarantees for one of the Baltic States. . . ." On leaving Molotov, Munters went to see the German Ambassador, Von der Schulenburg, as Latvia and Germany were bound by an agreement recently concluded. Schulenburg advised Munters to submit, and twenty-four hours later, on October 5, the Soviet-Latvian agreement was signed.

"The Mutual Assistance Pact between the U. S. S. R. and the Latvian Republic" repeated word for word the pact signed the previous week with Estonia. In this case, too, the contracting parties undertook to render each other every assistance, including military, in the event of a direct aggression or of threat of aggression arising on the part of any great European power against the sea frontiers of the contracting powers or their "land frontiers across Estonia and Lithuania." Latvia was thus obligated to come to Russia's assistance only in case of a war in the Baltic. Germany was especially referred to although not mentioned by name. Russia in turn guaranteed to Latvia the exercise of her sovereign rights and the status quo in her "economic system and state organization."

On October 18 the two governments also signed a trade agreement which provided for trebling the volume of trade, to about 60,000,000 lats a year. Latvia received the right

to transport goods over the territory of the Soviet Union, and the Soviet in turn agreed to increase its transport of goods through Latvian ports, which hitherto had been negligible, amounting to only about 300,000 rubles per year in value.<sup>12</sup>

The Latvian press, in unison with the Soviet and German newspapers, went into raptures over the new agreements. The Riga *Rīts* stated that Latvia had nothing to fear since the Mutual Assistance Pact had been worked out with the active participation of Stalin himself, "the most authoritative political leader of the Soviet Union."<sup>13</sup> In a speech of October 24 Munters likewise insisted that there was no reason to fear the Soviet Union. Germany, too, had to keep a smiling face, although she had now lost Riga which was extremely valuable to her. The official *Völkischer Beobachter* welcomed the pact and the trade agreement, for "Latvia had suffered greatly from the military operations in the East." The *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* expressed satisfaction over the fact that "the right to decide upon matters concerning the Baltic belongs exclusively to the Baltic States." The Soviet press was equally enthusiastic. "The Latvian state," *Pravda* wrote, "has practically no fleet or air power. Henceforth, however, the Latvian people know that they will receive military equipment and materials on favorable terms from the U. S. S. R."<sup>14</sup>

According to *Pravda*, the Soviet negotiations with Estonia and Latvia indicated "how carefully the Soviet Government respects the rights of small nations" and with what "respect the U. S. S. R. listens to the proposals of the states with which she makes pacts."

Latvia granted Soviet Russia naval bases at Libau and Windau, a number of airfields, and the right to establish artillery posts on the coast between Windau and Pitraga. On October 30 the Red Army entered Latvia.

### *Lithuania*

The negotiations with Lithuania followed a somewhat different course. Lithuania had no common border with Russia, hence the danger of Soviet aggression seemed some-

what more remote than to Latvia and Estonia. On the other hand, one of her neighbors, Poland, she had for eighteen years regarded as an implacable enemy. After Zeligowski's seizure of Vilno in 1920, there were no diplomatic relations between Lithuania and Poland, and not even a railroad connection until March, 1938. Lithuania's other neighbor, Germany, had invaded the Memel district in March, 1939, and deprived her both of the Baltic port of Memel and of possession of the district, or Klaipeda. Thus Lithuania regarded Russia more or less as her protector against these two large and aggressive states. It would be incorrect, however, to overemphasize this fact and to assume that the Lithuanian people submitted without apprehension to Soviet military occupation. Their feelings were decidedly mixed.

Moscow in turn regarded Lithuania differently from her two Baltic neighbors. Unlike Estonia and Latvia, Lithuania had never joined in a pact with Germany. Moreover, Poland was the enemy of Lithuania as well as of the Soviet Union. Lithuania had never given up her demand that Poland return the city of Vilno—the capital of medieval Lithuania, which had been forcibly seized in the early days of Polish and Lithuanian independence; Moscow supported Lithuania's claim.

As early as September 3, 1939, immediately following the German invasion of Poland, voices were raised in Kaunas demanding the return of Vilno. This demand was repeated frequently during the war between Poland and Germany, and particularly after the Red Army had invaded Eastern Poland. At this time, however, the fate of the Lithuanian Republic itself was as yet uncertain. On September 4 rumors began to emanate from Berlin that Russia had not received the right to occupy Lithuania and that this country would remain as a buffer state between Germany and the U. S. S. R.<sup>15</sup> On September 19, when Soviet troops, marching through Poland, approached the Lithuanian border from the direction of Vilno, there occurred a "fraternization of Soviet and Lithuanian soldiers," which prompted the United Press to cable from Kaunas that

"Lithuania might share in the new partition of Poland." At this time Kaunas again put forward its demand for the return of Vilno to Lithuania.

On September 18 Soviet troops had entered Vilno. The same day Molotov received the Lithuanian Envoy to Moscow and assured him that no military operations would take place on Lithuanian soil. The following day the Kaunas radio officially raised the question of the return of Vilno.

On September 29 Von Ribbentrop flew back from Moscow to Berlin with a new and final solution of the Lithuanian question in his pocket. Immediately after his departure, Molotov invited the Lithuanian Government to send a delegation to Moscow.

When the Lithuanian Foreign Minister, Urbshis, arrived in Moscow he was received by such high Soviet dignitaries as Marshal Voroshilov and Lazar Kaganovich. A magnificent reception was arranged for the occasion. Urbshis, nevertheless, had to return to Kaunas twice to consult with his government, and the Lithuanian-Soviet Pact was signed only on October 10.

This pact was somewhat more involved than the two previous Baltic agreements and included a clause providing for the return of the city and district of Vilno to Lithuania.\* The recovery by Lithuania of its largest city and ancient capital was, from a strictly national point of view, an event of major significance. At last one problem which for two decades had poisoned the political atmosphere in the Baltic and stood in the way of complete economic readjustment of the Baltic States was solved. Inasmuch as Moscow had also promised, with Stalin's assent, not to sovietize Lithuania, the little Baltic Republic had indeed good cause to rejoice. Farsighted political analysts pre-

\* In their attempt to protect Lithuania's interests, the Lithuanian delegates in Moscow sought to play off the Georgian, Stalin, against the Great Russian, Molotov. Stalin, however, protested: "What sort of a Georgian am I," he replied, "when I have spoken Russian for forty years?" (From an unpublished manuscript entitled "German-Soviet Relations as Seen from the Baltic." The author, now in the United States, was well placed to have an intimate knowledge of events in Lithuania in 1939-40. He was kind enough to give me the opportunity to make use of his yet unpublished work.)

dicted a storm to follow sunny days, but for the politicians of the small European states shortsighted policies were the rule rather than the exception.

Stalin's reason for turning over Vilno to Lithuania is not quite clear, as the majority of the city's population was not even Lithuanian. Vilno was always an important Communist center. No sooner had Soviet troops entered the city when there began what is described in Communist terminology as a rapid process of socialization. To Stalin this was indeed a triumph. Then suddenly, for some inexplicable reason, Vilno was transferred to "capitalist Lithuania," which was at the same time assured of sovereignty and of economic and social inviolability. The Lithuanian Communists organized a demonstration in front of the Soviet Legation in Kaunas, carrying placards which read: "We do not want Vilno to become Lithuanian; we want Kaunas to become Soviet." The demonstration was dispersed by the Kaunas police and there were even a few arrests.<sup>16</sup>

Was the return of Vilno to Lithuania a gesture on the part of Stalin, another manifestation of Russia's "respect for the rights of small nations"? Such a conjecture seems baseless since it is contrary to the whole course of Soviet foreign policy during that period. Was this solution agreed upon with Germany when Lithuania was transferred from the German sphere of interest to the Soviet sphere? This is possible,\* but a definitive answer to this question must await the opening of the secret archives.

Outwardly the Soviet treaty with Lithuania was more favorable to the weaker partner than those with Estonia and Latvia. Article 1 stated that, "in order to strengthen the friendship between the U. S. S. R. and Lithuania, the city of Vilno and the district of Vilno are hereby returned to the Republic of Lithuania by the U. S. S. R., to be reunited with the territory of the State of Lithuania." As a liberal innovation, the Russians introduced a clause providing for "mutual consultation" in specific cases as, for instance, "in the event of a direct aggression or a menace

\* Further support for this theory is the fact that Soviet Russia returned to Lithuania only a part of the Vilno district. The Sviencyany section remained in Russian hands.

of aggression against Lithuania or the U. S. S. R. through the territory of Latvia." In such case, "both contracting parties will at once consult with each other and take all such measures as will be mutually agreed upon as necessary." This almost gave the illusion of complete equality between the two signatories. Finally, in addition to stating, as the other two agreements had, that it did not affect the sovereign rights of the contracting parties, in particular their economic system and state organization, the pact provided that Soviet Russia would follow a policy of "noninterference in the internal affairs" of Lithuania.

In all other essential points the pact with Lithuania followed the pattern established by the agreements with Estonia and Latvia. Soviet Russia received the right to maintain on Lithuanian territory land and air armed forces "of strictly limited strength," and in turn was obligated to aid the Lithuanian Army with equipment and other supplies of a military nature.

A week later a new trade agreement was also signed between Moscow and Kaunas which established the exchange of goods between the two countries at 40,000,000 lits, or twice the existing volume.

This time elation was genuine enough, though of a narrow, shortsighted character. Patriotic demonstrations took place in Kaunas, and the Lithuanian negotiators were received as heroes on returning from Moscow. The Lithuanian press sang odes of praise to the Soviet Union and published large portraits of Stalin, Molotov, and Kalinin. The newspaper *Apžvalga* commented gleefully: "Just as nineteen years ago, the return of Vilno to Lithuania comes as a result of cardinal changes in the political structure of Eastern Europe. Once again the return of our ancient capital is guaranteed by an agreement with the U. S. S. R."

The Soviet press went into rapturous comments upon the magnanimity of the Soviet Government, and the sacred rights of small nations. There was no end to their ecstasy. Even the usually restrained and staid *Bolshevik* adopted a different tone on this occasion.

The foul breath of imperialist wars in Europe poisons the atmosphere of the small and so-called neutral states which find them-



selves within the sphere of influence of the powerful capitalist countries . . . Switzerland . . . Holland . . . The news from Eastern Europe, however, is of an altogether different character. The news from there is joyful and inspiring. The return of Vilno [to Lithuania] is an illustrious act which only the Soviet Union was able to accomplish. Ever since achieving her independence, Lithuania has lived in fear of aggression. Now this threat is removed.<sup>17</sup>

In all the Red Army spent forty days in Vilno; this was an epochal period in the history of Lithuania as well as of the Red Army. When the troops entered Vilno, they were greeted as saviors from the "Brown Menace." This was particularly true of the Poles and Jews who constituted the great majority of its population. "The Red Army men, both soldiers and officers, considered themselves protectors of Vilno against the Nazi terror. At the frontiers, for instance, all a Polish refugee had to do was to tell the Red soldier or officer that he was running from the Hitlerites to be permitted to cross the border without even showing his documents." In general the Red Army men made an excellent impression on the people of Vilno. "They were extremely courteous, lenient, and did not employ profane language. They did not rob the civilian population and paid for all purchases in cash. They sought to avoid conflicts."<sup>18</sup>

To the Red Army men of all ranks this invasion of Vilno and of the other Baltic States brought many surprises. This was their first opportunity to become more closely acquainted with living conditions in the "bourgeois states" about which they had heard so much in their military schools and academies. The unexpected discovery that living standards in these capitalist countries were higher than in Soviet Russia, that the "capitalist" economic mechanism worked with greater efficiency than their own, was altogether incomprehensible to these Russians. The Russian journal *Novyi Mir* gives a remarkable account of this first contact of the Soviet troops with "capitalist" civilization:

Can I buy some candy? a Red Army man asks at a little candy store.

You certainly can, replied the storekeeper.

Can I buy even a pound? asks the Red Army man.

If you have the money, you can even buy two pounds.

The Red Army man buys up the whole candy stock of the store.

What particularly amazed the soldiers was the abundance of shoes for sale, compared with Soviet provincial towns. One man remarked compassionately to a storekeeper:

"You must have an extremely poor country. In our country we would have bought out your stock in no time."

Another remarked. "You must have a better propaganda apparatus than ours. Look at all the goods you have prepared for the arrival of the Red Army."

Nevertheless, reports *Novyi Mir*, "it must be truthfully said that when the Red Army troops evacuated Vilno, few tears were shed." Because the Soviet soldiers and officers bought up everything they could lay hands on, toward the end of their stay in Vilno all commodities, foodstuffs as well as manufactured goods, disappeared. One could not even buy bread in Vilno, and the city was faced with starvation. Machines, mechanical equipment in the plants and factories, were dismantled and shipped to Russia. At the same time the Soviet G. P. U. carried out arrests among the inhabitants and deported many of them to the interior of Russia. For many, the departure of the Red troops was certainly a relief. The advancing Lithuanian forces were greeted with genuine enthusiasm by the people of Vilno.

On October 27 the Red Army withdrew from Vilno and handed over the city to the Lithuanian authorities. The Lithuanian Premier telegraphed to Molotov to express the gratitude of his government. In the meantime Soviet troops were occupying quarters allotted them by the Lithuanian Government.

### 5. *Transfer of Population*

The policy of forcibly sorting out and reshuffling populations according to their nationality or race has been a

cardinal principle in the National Socialist pattern of power, especially since 1939. Even where Germany borders on a politically kindred state, as in the case of Italy, she has pursued the same policy of compulsory resorting of national groups. A special German organization operating under the slogan *Heim ins Reich* has returned to Germany tens of thousands of German nationals from all parts of the world. In 1938 30,443 Germans—or about 2,500 per month—migrated to Germany with the aid of the German Government. Early in 1939 this movement of population reached the figure of 4,000 a month.<sup>19</sup>

So important a role does the principle of “national integration” play in the ideological and political make-up of National Socialism that even in wartime, despite the lack of adequate transport facilities, this sifting out of the civilian population according to national and racial origin has been going on uninterruptedly and tens of thousands of men, women, and children were continually being transferred from one part of Europe to another. About 400,000 Germans were moved out of the eastern territories that fell within the Soviet sphere of interest as a result of the Russo-German Pact. (Incidentally, Heinrich Himmler, the head of the Gestapo, was given charge of the repatriation of Germans.) Hundreds of thousands of Jews have been shifted into the so-called “ghetto regions” from other parts of Poland as well as from Germany proper and from France. All this while Germany has been engaged in a gigantic military struggle.

As for Soviet Russia, national segregation plays no part in its ideology or its political system. However, for one reason or another, Russia too had shifted large groups of the population in the 1930's, and when Von Ribbentrop requested, on the basis of the new Russian and German “spheres of interests,” that the German population be repatriated from the Russian “sphere,” the Kremlin raised no objections. In 1935 the Soviet Government itself had moved whole villages from the Finnish frontier<sup>20</sup> for reasons of defense; it had also evacuated, apparently for the same reasons, large numbers of people living near its frontier with Poland. In 1931-34, at the height of collec-

tivization of Soviet agriculture, hundreds of thousands of well-to-do peasants, the so-called "kulaks," were exiled by the government to the North and to the East.

When the Russo-German agreements were concluded in August, 1939, the German Government had economic and political reasons as well as national and racial motives for requesting the transfer of Germans to the Reich. In placing Eastern Poland and the Baltic States within the Russian "sphere of interest," Hitler insisted upon the right to repatriate not only German nationals but also all other persons of German origin who might wish to go to Germany. He anticipated, of course, the sovietization of these areas and feared its economic effect on the Germans, who represented the more prosperous sections of the population, particularly in the Baltic States. Finally, he had no doubt but that Stalin would readily agree to this request. The Germans who lived in Soviet Russia proper, and particularly in the provinces that now fell within the Soviet sphere, were the element most susceptible to the influence of National Socialism. Stalin could expect that in a crisis it would be among them the Nazis would recruit their "fifth columns" and other agents. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the decision on the "transfer of population" was reached with less difficulty than some of the other German-Soviet agreements.

For Germany, which had regarded the Germans in Russia and especially in the Baltic States as a bastion of its influence in the East, the question of repatriation was a painful one. It certainly meant a loss of prestige for them. In their day the Baltic Germans—there were altogether 100,000 of them—had played an important role in Czarist Russia, a role altogether out of proportion to their number. They had held high positions at court, in the universities, and in the administration. As early as the beginning of the twentieth century, and long before the rise of National Socialism, all German dreams of a "Greater Reich" had stressed the idea of expansion toward the east with the aid of these "*Ostdeutsche*." Under the German monarchy they had served as a link between the court of William II and that of Nicholas II. The Russian Govern-

ment had found in the "German barons" of the Baltic provinces the most fanatical opponents of revolution and the unswerving supporters of the monarchy. Later they had produced a number of prominent Nazi leaders, like Alfred Rosenberg, who had begun their "struggle against Marxism" while still under Russian rule and long before the rise of National Socialism.

The German propaganda now had to resort to peculiar arguments in its attempts to explain to the German people this policy in the Baltic States. In his desire to avoid mentioning the Soviet threat to Germany, Hitler explained the repatriation of the Baltic Germans in his speech of October 6, 1939, as follows:

The entire east and southeast of Europe are populated by fragments of the German nation which are frequently the cause of friction between states. In our epoch, when the idea of integrated nationality and of racial superiority has triumphed, it would be Utopian to hope that it is possible simply to assimilate the members of this superior nation! . . . By mutual consent Germany and Soviet Russia agreed to support each other in this matter of repatriating Germans to Germany and Russians to Russia.

In the meantime rumors spread that this evacuation of the German population was being carried out at Russia's request. Moscow denied these rumors. The explanation which was offered simultaneously in Moscow, in Berlin, and in the Baltic States was that the repatriation of Germans was being effected expressly on Germany's initiative and solely in a spirit of friendship toward Russia. At the same time another version was mooted about which, although quite typical of the times, did not correspond to the reality. According to this Moscow was not even a party to the business of repatriation. The following comment, for instance, was published in the official *Deutsche Diplomatrische-Politische Korrespondenz*:

Germany's negotiations with Latvia and Estonia about evacuating German nationals from these countries testify once again to the fact that the German Government does not intend to exploit the Germans living abroad for imperialist aims. By

this move Germany emphatically denies once again the allegation that she is striving to attain hegemony in Europe and underscores the limitation of her interests, as does also her agreement with the U. S. S. R. Germany considers that this is the most appropriate moment to return the Baltic Germans to their homeland.

This version, which, like Hitler's speech, was designed to mask the real motives for shifting the German population, was also supported publicly by the Latvian Premier, Ulmanis, in a speech which he made on signing the Latvian-German Agreement on repatriation. Obviously at the insistence of Moscow, he stated:

Groundless rumors are being spread that the departure of the German inhabitants is connected with the Latvian-Soviet Pact. How little truth there is to such conjectures can be seen from the fact that the repatriation of Germans began from countries which have not concluded pacts with Russia. [He was referring to Finland where the German Minister in Helsinki had advised the German population not to lose any time in settling their affairs and departing for Germany.] The repatriation of the German population is being done expressly at the request of the German Government and is unrelated to any other events.<sup>21</sup>

The Soviet agency, Tass, also went out of its way to emphasize the absence of any connection between the evacuation of the Germans from the Baltic States and the mutual assistance agreements which the Soviet Government was then negotiating with Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania.

Three and a half million Germans lived in Europe outside the borders of the Reich: out of this number 1,200,000 were in Soviet Russia; 62,000 in Latvia; 15,000 in Estonia; 35,000 in Lithuania; 80,000 in Bessarabia and 40,000 in Bukovina, etc. Out of these large groups of Germans Hitler's government decided to repatriate in the first place those who inhabited Latvia, Estonia, and Eastern Poland. The negotiations with Latvia and Estonia proceeded smoothly and speedily, and agreements were concluded on October 8. Supplementary agreements were signed on October 15 with Estonia and on October 30 with Latvia. By them

Latvia and Estonia agreed to release from Latvian and Estonian citizenship all persons of German origin, including prisoners and soldiers, who might wish to be repatriated. The entire process of repatriation from Latvia and Estonia was to be carried out with the utmost dispatch and to be completed by December 15, or within two months after the agreements had been ratified. The property of the repatriated Germans, which, according to some sources, amounted to some \$200,000,000 or \$300,000,000, could not be taken out of these countries because of existing restrictions on the export of valuables and foreign exchange. The emigrants had to leave their former homes with insignificant sums of money, and their properties were taken over by an agency specially organized to liquidate them. Money realized from the sale of their property was credited to a special German organization.\* Thus Germany had a further motive in adopting this scheme of repatriation. It was tantamount to finding new sources of gold or foreign exchange, since she could now to a certain extent demand from the states in question goods to the value of the money credited to the special German organization.

The speed with which the evacuation was carried out worked hardship on many of the departing Germans. With literally two days' notice many of them had to give up homes which had been settled by far-off ancestors and board German steamers. They were settled finally in the former Polish district of Poznan (now renamed Warthegau, with Posen as its capital). Here some of them were located on farms confiscated from exiled Polish peasants, or in cities where they received the homes, shops, and factories of deported Jews and Poles. In the meantime, all German associations were liquidated in the Baltic States.

The second wave of large-scale repatriation of Germans occurred in the provinces of Eastern Poland which had been ceded to Russia. Soon after the agreements with Latvia and Estonia, the German commission which had negotiated them left for Moscow to discuss the repatria-

\* The value of Hitler's loot can perhaps be estimated by the fact that in Riga alone 1,800 homes of Germans were placed on sale. (*New York Times*, February 14, 1940.)

tion of the Germans of Eastern Poland. Within two weeks an agreement was reached; it was signed on November 3, 1939. According to some sources this agreement also included the repatriation of Germans who lived on pre-1939 Russian territory. On the other hand, Russians, Ukrainians, and White Russians who had been left within the German sphere were given the right to move to Russian territory.

Unfortunately, while a great deal is known about the shifting of Germans from the Baltic States, there are few concrete data on the Russo-German exchange of population. Foreign correspondents were barred from the areas concerned, and neither the German nor Russian press had much to report on these repatriations.

Although the agreements on repatriation had been reached without difficulty, the process of evacuation was not frictionless. Without accusing Russia directly, many stories were published in German newspapers describing the hardships that the German emigrants had experienced during the evacuation, particularly German farmers who had had to travel for several days before reaching a railroad station, and had been forced on the way to dispose of the food and the few personal belongings which they had taken with them. Many evacués reported to the German authorities the disappearance of relatives and friends.

The third wave of evacuation affected about 90,000 Germans from Bessarabia and 44,000 from Northern Bukovina. They were sent first to Yugoslavia and then to various parts of Poland and Germany. (This question will be referred to again in connection with the Soviet annexation of Bessarabia in June, 1940.)

Subsequently, on January 10, 1941, two more agreements were signed simultaneously in Riga and Kaunas covering the transfer of Germans from Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia and also the repatriation of Russians and Lithuanians from the Memel and Suwalki districts which were occupied by Germany. The nationals involved were given two and a half months to depart for the countries which they chose. Of these 67,805 persons went to Germany and 21,343 were repatriated to Russia.

Altogether 437,000 Germans were repatriated from Rus-



sia and the Russian sphere during the war:<sup>22</sup> 63,000 from Latvia, 12,000 from Estonia, 130,000 from Volhynia, Galicia, and the Narew district, 30,000 from the Lublin-Kholm area, 90,000 from Bessarabia, 44,000 from Northern Bukovina, 68,000 from Lithuania, and the rest of the Baltic States.\*

According to the Soviet-German Agreement, the following three groups of Soviet citizens had to be evacuated from German-occupied regions into Soviet Russia: (1) refugees from Soviet Russia; (2) students having their residence in Soviet Russia; (3) Soviet citizens who happened to be under German jurisdiction at the outbreak of the war. Originally it was estimated that there were 600,000 to 1,000,000 Russian nationals (including Ukrainians, White Russians, and Jews) in German Poland. Out of this number 35,000 were repatriated to Russia during February 1940, and another group of 21,343 was transferred at the beginning of 1941, following the agreements of January 10.

After the break between Germany and Russia, Hitler drew up a balance of the entire repatriation campaign. He leveled some bitter accusations against the Soviet Government:

Many more than 500,000 Germans\* were forced to leave their former homes practically overnight in order to escape from a new regime which at first treated them with boundless cruelty and sooner or later threatened them with complete extermination . . . Thousands of Germans disappeared. It was impossible ever to determine their fate, let alone their whereabouts. To all this I remained silent because I had to.<sup>23</sup>

Somewhat later the German press hinted that among the repatriated Germans there were many secret Soviet agents. But the Germans, on the other hand, acquired thousands of people who had an intimate knowledge of

\* Mrs. Hedwig Wachenheim gives the following data. Estonia, 12,868, Latvia, 48,641; Volhynia, 64,554; Galicia, 55,440, Bialystok, 8,053; Northern Bukovina, 42,441; Bessarabia, 93,548, Lithuania, 50,000; latecomers from Latvia-Estonia, 10,000. (Total, 385,545. *Foreign Affairs*, July, 1942.)

\* This figure is wrong. Altogether 437,000 Germans were repatriated. Hitler apparently had in mind the 70,000 Germans who were transferred from Dobrudja, Southern Bukovina, etc.

Soviet Russia, of its geography and social conditions. At the outbreak of the Soviet-German War these Germans from the Baltic States, from Poland, Volhynia, and other eastern territories undoubtedly played an important role in the German advance. They were an extremely valuable instrument in carrying on propaganda in the conquered territories and in organizing them economically and politically.

### 6. *Soviet Russia and the British Blockade*

England informed Russia of her naval blockade of Germany in notes of September 6 and 11, 1939. In this connection the British Government detained a number of vessels laden with rubber purchased by Russia. In turn the Soviet Government postponed the departure of twelve British ships carrying Russian timber valued at \$5,000,000. On September 10 Moscow issued an official statement through Tass to the effect that "the actions of the British Government were undermining the basis for Anglo-Russian trade." Tass also reported that for various reasons—perhaps because of direct interference on the part of the government—British firms had failed to fulfill their contracts with Russian industrial enterprises. At the same time British authorities discontinued the issuance of export licenses to the Soviet trading agency in London.

England was not yet fully aware of the turn which the war would take, and particularly of Russia's role in it. The public still hoped that it would be possible to maintain and even expand Anglo-Russian trade relations. Thus when Ivan Maisky, Soviet Ambassador in London, suggested to the British Foreign Office a settlement of the trade difficulties which had arisen between the two countries, it was still possible on October 10, two weeks after the start of the negotiations, to reach an agreement for the exchange of Russian timber for British tin and rubber. This arrangement called forth a number of angry inquiries in the House of Commons, but the Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax, and the Under Secretary, Mr. Butler, assured the House that Germany would not benefit by this barter, since

Russia was herself in need of these materials. Moreover, stated Lord Halifax, the quantities involved did not exceed the normal volume of Soviet purchases before the war.

This arrangement, minor though it was, raised British hopes of the possibility of establishing normal trade relations with Russia. Even the responsible London *Economist* indicated with satisfaction that this might be the beginning of favorable trade relations between the two countries. However insurmountable difficulties, which led to many fruitless conversations, arose soon thereafter, when Maisky proposed to expand Russo-British trade negotiations. Although extremely pessimistic as to the final outcome, Lord Halifax nevertheless informed the Soviet Ambassador that he favored in principle the continuation of the negotiations. Maisky was given a list of materials which Britain was ready to supply to Russia. Moscow, in turn, was supposed to inform the British of the kind of goods she proposed to furnish England in exchange. For more than a month no reply was forthcoming. In the meantime the Finnish crisis was nearing the breaking point. Russo-British relations began to worsen rapidly, and on November 28, 1939—two days before the outbreak of Russo-Finnish hostilities—Halifax informed Maisky that if Russia should attack Finland Soviet-British trade negotiations would be broken off. Maisky replied in a similarly threatening tone. If Britain gave encouragement to Finland the Soviet Government would take the initiative in terminating the negotiations. Soon after, trade negotiations were broken off.

In the meantime Britain's naval blockade of Germany was creating great hardships for the European neutrals. Germany eagerly publicized every protest by neutral states. Not until six weeks after the blockade was officially proclaimed, however, did the Soviet Government issue a sharply-worded note of protest, which was handed to the British Ambassador in Moscow on October 25.

In its note Moscow insisted that the list of articles and materials which Britain had declared contraband was not in accordance with the agreement of 1909; that "it will result in great losses to the neutral countries and will

tend to destroy international trade." The note protested particularly against the inclusion in the contraband list of "articles of primary necessity," such as wheat, butter, meat, sugar, fuel, shoes, textiles, fodder, and clothing, "which will certainly tend to undermine the health of the civilian populations and to create untold hardships for the masses." Russia was also displeased with the method of contraband control established by the British Government, which had designated a number of ports to which all neutral vessels were forced to go for inspection. One novel argument used by Moscow was the insistence that Soviet ships were not privately owned but belonged to the state and hence "could not be subjected to forceful measures." In refusing to accept the British notes of November 6 and 11, the Soviet Government insisted upon its right to demand compensation from Britain for all losses incurred as a result of the blockade.

Moscow took some pains to emphasize that its note was "of first-rate importance" and Berlin readily concurred. But not London, which took a different view. The legal claims of the note, particularly its reference to the agreement of 1909, were no longer actual, since even in the war of 1914-18 the list of goods regarded as contraband embraced many more articles than had been stipulated in that agreement. Secondly, German submarines were already sinking ships loaded with wheat and fuel. Moreover, at the very moment when Potemkin, Assistant Commissar of Foreign Affairs, was handing this note to the British Ambassador in Moscow, Maisky was talking in London with Oliver Stanley, President of the British Board of Trade, about the goods Britain and Russia might exchange under a barter agreement.<sup>24</sup> This coincidence was no accident. It is reasonable to assume that while Russia was protesting vociferously against the blockade she was also eager to weaken the effect of this protest in London. Moscow was in effect saying to London: in spite of our threatening gestures we want to continue our negotiations; in general, we want to prevent our relations with England from deteriorating completely.

But the trade negotiations, which had been disrupted on

the eve of the Soviet-Finnish War, were not renewed until that war was over. On March 18, after Russia had concluded peace with Finland and the threat of a conflict between the Soviet Union and the Allies had been removed, the British Foreign Office proposed through Maisky to renew trade negotiations.<sup>25</sup> This offer was more a "feeler" than a serious attempt to reestablish normal commercial relations. During the six months of war London had reached the conclusion that Russia was an economic partner of Germany and that to supply her with goods was tantamount to helping Germany. The difficulties in reaching a trade agreement finally proved to be insurmountable.

On March 27 Maisky informed the Foreign Office that Moscow was ready to renew trade negotiations, provided that the British Government would first release the two Soviet steamers, *Selenga* and *Mayakovsky*, which were detained in a British port. It took three weeks for Downing Street to reply. On April 19 Lord Halifax asked what guarantee the Soviet Government would be ready to give that the goods on these steamers would not be transferred to Germany.\* Maisky replied on April 27 that, regardless of the war, Russia was maintaining normal trade relations with belligerents as well as with neutrals and that she would also fulfill her contractual obligations to Germany. He refused to discuss with England Russia's commercial relations with Germany. At the same time he pointed out that the release of the two steamers by Britain "would be a prerequisite for concluding a trade agreement."

On May 8 Lord Halifax handed Maisky a memorandum mainly devoted to questions concerning Russo-German trade. It informed Moscow that the two Soviet steamers, had already been turned over to French authorities and were now under the jurisdiction of the French Government. However, Britain proposed to Russia to come to an understanding regarding a system of contraband control and inspection of Soviet vessels. In his reply of May 20 Molotov stated that Russia could not possibly subordinate

\* Ronald Cross, Minister of Economic Warfare, told the House of Commons on February 25 that the Soviet import of tin and rubber by way of the Pacific had increased "efforts to ship contraband via Vladivostok."

her trade activities to the military requirements of other states and therefore declined to discuss Russo-German trade relations with Great Britain. Russia, he said, intended to import British goods for her own consumption and not for Germany. He also rejected as "unconvincing" Halifax's explanation regarding the two Soviet steamers.

The negotiations were a complete failure. Normal trade relations between Russia and Germany's enemies were out of the question at that period. The truth was, of course, that the British did not expect a great deal to come out of the talks; what they hoped to find out was how far Russia was aiding Germany.

### 7. *Turkey*

September 17, 1939, was a turning point in the foreign policy of Soviet Russia. On that day Soviet troops crossed the Polish border and the Red Army was ordered to approach the frontiers of Latvia and Estonia. On the 17th the Soviet Government made public a number of declarations and diplomatic notes regarding its foreign policy. On that day the Kremlin also requested the government of Turkey to send its Minister for Foreign Affairs to Moscow to open conversations.

For almost two decades Turkey had been the most consistent ally of the Soviets. In turn, Moscow had on more than one occasion, come to the aid of the Ankara government in matters of vital importance in the conduct of its foreign affairs.

Turkey had lost the war of 1914-18; this made it, in the eyes of Moscow, a "victim of the imperialist powers." From a Communist point of view, the Turkish Republic could not be regarded as a purely "capitalist state" and this ideological consideration made it easier for Moscow to seek a rapprochement with Ankara.

In the middle of the 1930's Italy embarked upon campaigns of aggression in Ethiopia and in Spain, and with each successive Italian victory the threat of Mussolini's fleet to Turkey loomed larger. Until 1940 Italy rather than Germany presented the greater danger to Turkey. On

April 1, 1939, Italian forces invaded Albania. When it became clear that this marked merely the beginning of Italy's advance into the Balkans, Turkey was forced to look for new allies. Her natural supporters could be only England and France, since the whole problem was one of relative naval strength in the Mediterranean. Under the circumstances, Russian aid, even if Moscow had consented to extend military assistance to Turkey, was not within the realm of possibility. Turkey's approach to England and France fell in nicely with the policies of the latter, which were at that very moment seeking for agreements with Poland, Rumania, and other small states against Axis aggression. A preliminary agreement between Turkey and England was announced on May 12; on June 24 a similar agreement was concluded between Turkey and France. In as much as Russia was conducting negotiations with England and France for the conclusion of an anti-German bloc, Turkey also informed Moscow of her negotiations, and the Kremlin gave its blessing to Turkey's agreement with the Western Powers.\*

The pacts that were being negotiated between Turkey, England, and France were rather complicated, since they had to provide for all kinds of eventualities and combinations in the Mediterranean. It took a long time to work out their details, but on the outbreak of the war between Germany and the Allies they were ready to be signed. At the last moment, however, following the Kremlin's invitation to send the Turkish Foreign Minister to Moscow, the act of signature had to be postponed, since Turkey was also anxious to reach an understanding with Russia. The Kremlin, of course, had been informed in advance that the proposed pacts were to contain a clause stipulating that under no circumstances was Turkey to go to war with Russia.

The Russo-German Pact, signed on the eve of the outbreak of European hostilities, complicated Turkey's position enormously. Until August 23 Turkey could be

\* "Soviet public opinion regards the mutual assistance agreement concluded between Turkey and England as a valuable investment in the cause of world peace." (*Izvestiya*, May 15, 1939)

simultaneously pro-Ally and pro-Soviet. After the signing of the Russo-German Pact, however, the political situation was radically changed. With Moscow now directing its policy against the "warmongers," Great Britain and France, Turkey could no longer remain both pro-Soviet and pro-Ally. Nor could she choose sides without grave risks. When Russia requested Ankara to send its Foreign Minister to Moscow, some hope was revived that Turkey might become a diplomatic bridge between Russia and the Western Powers. No government was better qualified for this office than Turkey.

In the meantime, Russia's foreign policy was being determined by the new international situation created by the Russo-German Pact. Moscow hoped within the immediate future to settle her difference with Rumania over Bessarabia. Rumania had a formal guarantee of her borders from England and France; a diplomatic conflict between Soviet Russia and Rumania, which could easily have turned into a military clash, might have meant, in the tense situation that existed in Europe in 1939, war between Moscow and the Western Allies. England and France were obligated to extend unlimited military aid to Rumania, particularly with their fleets, provided that these could pass the Dardanelles into the Black Sea.

Under the circumstances, everything depended upon Turkey. According to the Montreux Convention of 1936, which regulated the international status of the Dardanelles—particularly, according to article 19 of this Convention, which, incidentally, had been included on the insistence of Soviet Russia—Turkey was obligated to permit the passage through the Dardanelles of the fleets of those powers which were to assist Rumania against aggression. Now it was only natural that Russia should regard with disfavor the possible appearance of an Allied fleet in the Black Sea. The Kremlin began to press Turkey to close the Dardanelles to ships that did not belong to Black Sea Powers. This was contrary to the Montreux Convention and a hard nut for Turkey to crack when she was about to conclude agreements with England and France.



In addition to this very important question, which the Soviet Government wished to discuss with the Turkish Foreign Minister, Moscow was also contemplating the signing of a mutual assistance agreement between the two countries. This was to be followed by closer collaboration—to be achieved with the aid of Turkey—with the other Balkan countries, thus forming a "bloc of neutral Balkan States." Russia's purpose in promoting such a bloc was to alienate the Balkan States from their Anglo-French allies, a course particularly advocated by Germany, whose aim was to weaken Anglo-French influence in Southeastern Europe. This was the form in which the parallelism of Russo-German policy was expressed in the Balkans—the parallelism incidentally did not last very long.

When Shukru Saracoglu, Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs, arrived in Moscow on September 26 he was at once received by Molotov. During their very first conference, without any preliminaries, the Soviet Foreign Commissar presented the main Soviet proposals. These were the closing of the Dardanelles to foreign warships and the conclusion of a Russo-Turkish mutual assistance pact. Saracoglu at once informed Molotov that the first part of the Soviet proposals was unacceptable to Turkey. Here the conversations ended. The following day Von Ribbentrop arrived in the Soviet capital, and the attention of the Kremlin was entirely engrossed with the German negotiations. On September 29 the Turkish Embassy in Moscow held a grand reception attended by Molotov, Voroshilov, Mikoyan, and other Soviet dignitaries. Both Molotov and Saracoglu made friendly speeches. Nevertheless, the Russo-Turkish negotiations were considered officially as interrupted and the Turkish delegation was preparing to leave Moscow on October 1.\*

However, Moscow was anxious to avoid a break with Ankara. (The entire Rumanian problem was still in a

\* In many quarters there were persistent rumors that Molotov had demanded of Turkey military bases in the Dardanelles. Although emanating from diplomatic sources they were never confirmed by any existing documents. Joseph E. Davies mentions them in his *Mission to Moscow* (p. 468).

hypothetical stage, and the question of Bessarabia had not yet been broached concretely.) Molotov proposed that the Turkish delegation postpone its departure and renew negotiations. On October 2 a four-hour conference took place between Stalin, Molotov, and the Turkish Foreign Minister, and Saracoglu informed his Cabinet of the nature of the new Soviet proposals. The Turkish Government, however, refused to make a single move in this matter without first consulting London and Paris. As a result, Saracoglu spent ten days in Moscow in complete diplomatic inactivity. He passed his time visiting museums and theaters, and studying the Soviet capital.

The German press expressed complete satisfaction with this state of affairs. The fact that Saracoglu remained in Moscow and that the Turkish-Soviet negotiations still continued was interpreted by Germany as favorable to her side. On October 5 the *Völkischer Beobachter* wrote triumphantly. "It is possible that Russia will obligate Turkey to maintain absolute neutrality and to close the Dardanelles. Thus, a great neutral bloc would be formed extending from Russia to Italy through the entire Balkans, which would nullify the plans for the encirclement of Germany."

Berlin had expected that, having signed the agreement with Russia, Saracoglu would, on his way back, meet with the Rumanian Foreign Minister, Gafencu, and the Bulgarian Minister, Kiosseivanov, for the purpose of further cementing the proposed "Neutral Bloc." Things, however, turned out differently. On October 13, upon receiving new instructions from Ankara, Saracoglu again met with Stalin and Molotov. He gave a negative reply to the Soviet proposals. The Turkish Government, in agreement with London and Paris, was ready to sign a mutual assistance pact with Russia, as an added concession, it was willing to revise the text of the agreement already completed with England and France so that a military conflict between Russia and Turkey would be, under all circumstances, ruled out. Ankara and the Allies looked with favor on the creation of a Balkan bloc, with the proviso that Turkey first sign the agreement with England and

France and thus bring the "Neutral Bloc" to the side of the Allies. But the closing of the Dardanelles was definitely rejected.

Stalin, it seems, was willing for the time being, at least, to accept an agreement such as that outlined by Ankara. Diplomatic circles both in Moscow and in Ankara expected the signing momentarily. Their expectations were premature. According to some sources the German Government, with which Molotov was in constant consultation, objected to such an arrangement, seeing in it, correctly enough, a defeat of German diplomacy.<sup>26</sup> On October 16 Molotov received Saracoglu for the last time. Much to the surprise of the Turkish Minister, he raised once more the question of the Dardanelles and also of Turkey's relation to Germany. He suggested that "Turkey should promise not to make war on Germany on behalf of the Western Powers."<sup>27</sup> The conversations were fruitless. However, the Kremlin was extremely anxious to avoid creating the impression of a break. Threatening gestures were out of the question. On the contrary, the farewell to Saracoglu, despite the failure of the negotiations, was very friendly. Important members of the Soviet Government saw him off at the station, a guard of honor was provided. The official communiqué issued by Moscow on the result of the negotiations was courteous and friendly in tone: "The exchange of opinions, carried on in a cordial atmosphere, indicates once again the friendly relations which exist between the U. S. S. R. and Turkey, and testifies that the aim of both governments is to work for the maintenance of peace." The communiqué also mentioned "future contacts between the two governments for the purpose of mutual discussion of problems that interest the Soviet Union and the Turkish Republic."

Immediately afterward, on October 19, Turkey signed the agreements with England and France. To those already completed was added "Protocol Number 2," according to which Turkey was under no circumstances obligated to go to war with Russia: "The obligations undertaken by Turkey in virtue of the above-mentioned Treaty cannot

compel the country to take action having, as its consequence, entry into armed conflict with the U. S. S. R."

In the text of the agreement, however, specific mention was made of aid to Rumania in case of aggression: "So long as the guarantees given by France and the United Kingdom to Greece and Rumania remain in force, Turkey will lend them all aid and assistance in its power in the event France and the United Kingdom are engaged in hostilities by virtue of either of the said agreements."

On this point the policies of Turkey and Russia were at odds. Turkey had entered firmly into the orbit of the Western Powers, while Russia sought to maintain a neutrality which was at that time to the advantage of Germany. The Soviet press regarded Turkey's choice as fatal since it led her straight into the war camp of the belligerents. According to the Soviet newspapers, Turkey had become the victim of those imperialist powers who sought to spread the war. This, too, was the opinion Molotov expressed in his speech of October 31, immediately after the breakdown in the Russo-Turkish negotiations.

The Government of Turkey has decided to link its fate to a definite group of European powers involved in the war . . . Thus Turkey has definitely rejected the cautious policy of neutrality and has decided to enter the orbit of the spreading European war. England and France are quite satisfied with this, since they seek to drag into the war as many neutral countries as they can. It is not, however, for us to guess whether Turkey will not regret her action.

Russo-Turkish relations continued on a cooler footing.

Molotov's prediction that Turkey would be involved in the war as a result of its agreement with England and France turned out to be a mistake: even when Russia was forced into the war in 1941, Turkey still remained neutral.

## CHAPTER V

### FINLAND

#### I. *The Situation in Finland*

THE same day that Latvia signed her Mutual Assistance Pact with Russia (October 5) the Soviet Government turned its attention to Finland. Of all the Baltic States only Finland remained as yet outside Russia's sheaf of pacts. The fact that Finland was left to the last was not accidental. The largest of the four Baltic countries, both in size and population, she needed time to become acclimatized to the new order in the Baltic and to digest the lessons taught by the experiences of Latvia and Estonia.

For a number of reasons the Finnish Republic was in a special category. Unlike the other states, she had enjoyed almost complete autonomy within the confines of the Czarist Empire, particularly after the Crimean War of 1855-56. In this respect Finland's status had been different from that of Poland and the Baltic territories. Finland had had her own Diet, at a later date even her own press. The policy of Russification had not been carried out in Finland with anything like the radical and ruthless measures taken in some other parts of the Russian Empire. Although subject to pressure on the part of the Petersburg government, Finland was indeed a separate country with separate laws and a distinct political and national life, although in her foreign policy she was completely subject to St. Petersburg since she had no military power of her own. After the World War in which Finland had regained her independence the Finns had continued to pursue their own course.

The Finnish Republic had been nearly destroyed by a widespread Communist rebellion in 1918. In the ensuing military conflicts with the Soviet forces Finland had

turned to Germany for help. The memory of this Communist uprising which had almost nipped Finnish independence in the bud was still fresh in the minds of the Finns. In the 1920's and 30's the Finnish Republic looked on Germany as a welcome counterbalance to Moscow's Communism. Unlike other European countries, however, this reaction against the Communist *putsch* did not bring about an antidemocratic regime in Finland as happened, for instance, in Hungary, Austria, Latvia, or Estonia, countries which had experienced similar Communist revolts. Even in the 1930's, when Germany began to draw into her ideological orbit one state after another, when democracy was being abandoned in most of the European countries that had once tasted Communism, Finland did not join this antidemocratic landslide but along with the Scandinavian countries, to which she is most closely related geographically and culturally, pursued her own independent course. This Finnish policy was to play an important part at the moment when Russia and Finland were approaching a break, and later, during the Russo-Finnish War. Finland's prestige stood high in England, France, and the United States. Possibly this universal sympathy for the Finnish Republic in the democratic countries did the Finns more harm than good, since it led to an exaggeration of the military power of England and France and of their ability to influence the political course of the European East.

In the negotiations between Finland and Russia the three most important problems that called for a radical solution were the Karelian isthmus and the Hankö and Rybachi peninsulas. The Aland Islands, curiously enough, which had hitherto figured as a chronic bone of contention between Russia and Finland, took second place.

The problem of the Karelian isthmus was twofold: the Karelian frontier, as established by the Treaty of Dorpat of October 14, 1920, was at some points only twenty miles from Leningrad. In terms of modern military technique Leningrad was indeed too close to the Finnish border and vulnerable to long-range artillery. Equally disturbing to

Russia were the modern fortifications known as the "Mannerheim Line," which Finland had constructed in the southwest corner of the Karelian isthmus.

The geographical position of Leningrad also brought into the dispute the control of a number of small islands in the Gulf of Finland located at the entrance to the Port of Leningrad. Even before the war Moscow had repeatedly requested that these islands be subjected to joint ownership or that they be divided between Russia and Finland. The Finnish Government, only too well aware that "joint ownership" was tantamount to relinquishing the islands to Russia, declined all such proposals. When war broke out in the West, the question of these islands was raised anew in Soviet-Finnish negotiations.

The second important point in the Soviet-Finnish conflict was the Hankö Peninsula, located in the southwestern corner of Finland where the Gulf of Finland enters the Baltic Sea. Opposite Hankö on the Estonian side is the large base of Baltiski Port. To bar ships of other powers from entering the Gulf of Finland it was necessary for Russia to fortify both Hankö and Baltiski Port. Possession of one of these areas separated by only fifty miles of sea was obviously insufficient. As a result of her agreement with Estonia Russia had acquired Baltiski Port as a naval base and now sought to establish herself on the opposite shore of the Gulf of Finland. Instead of Hankö, to be sure, she would have settled for some islands in the Gulf of Finland similarly strategically situated, but the question of Hankö was to be decisive in the Soviet-Finnish negotiations.

To understand the "psychological atmosphere" in which the Finnish-Soviet negotiations were carried on, it must be remembered that for Moscow Hankö evoked very unpleasant memories. On April 3, 1918, 12,000 German soldiers under the command of General von der Goltz had landed there for the purpose of suppressing the Communist revolt in Finland. The Finns had later erected a memorial at the spot where the troops had landed. Above all, Hankö was the most suitable Finnish port for easy contact with Germany.

The question of the Rybachi Peninsula and Petsamo was less important. In 1918-20 Soviet Russia had ceded to the Finnish Republic this peninsula, which lies in the north-western corner of Finland; Petsamo itself had never belonged to Finland before 1918. Now Moscow discovered that the frontier of this peninsula had been artificially and unskillfully drawn and demanded its return. Its motives were mainly strategic in character.

## 2. *Diplomatic Negotiations*

On October 5, 1939, Molotov summoned the Finnish Envoy, Yrjo Koskinen, to the Narkomindel and suggested that the Finnish Foreign Minister visit Moscow to "discuss a number of concrete questions" affecting Finnish-Soviet relations. He refused to inform Mr Koskinen as to the nature of the "concrete questions," hinting merely that the Minister or any other delegate that might be designated by the Finnish Government should not delay his arrival too long.

From the experience of the other Baltic States and on the basis of its own information, the Finnish Government was only too well aware of the nature of the "concrete questions." Taking a pessimistic view of the final upshot of the negotiations, Finland decided to send the Finnish Envoy to Sweden, J. Kusti Paasikivi, in place of the Foreign Minister. A former Prime Minister of Finland, Paasikivi, had participated in the 1920 negotiations for the Treaty of Dorpat. Years before he had studied in a Russian university and spoke Russian well.

The Finnish Government took several days to prepare its instructions for Paasikivi; they were ready only on October 9. Flushed with his success in dealing with the other Baltic States, Molotov expected greater speed on the part of Finland. On October 8 he instructed the Soviet Minister to Helsinki, Derevianski, to visit the Finnish Foreign Minister and inquire concerning the "cause" of the delay. The conversation between Derevianski and the Finnish Foreign Minister is extremely interesting both as to its form and its content. The Soviet Envoy remarked



that the delay in sending a delegate to Moscow "might have an unfortunate effect upon the course of the negotiations." He expressed displeasure over the fact that the Foreign Minister himself was not going to Moscow and inquired whether a substitution could not be made. Finally, he wanted to know whether the delegate would have full powers to sign an agreement. In the course of the conversation, however, Derevianski lifted the veil slightly on Soviet intentions. He explained that "the Soviet Union was interested in establishing a security zone in the Baltic so that neither Russia nor the Baltic States would become victims of aggression." As proof of Soviet intentions Derevianski pointed to the agreements successfully concluded with Estonia and Latvia. In reply the Finnish Foreign Minister, Erkko, declared categorically: "It does not seem possible that Finland should agree to conditions similar to those accepted by the other Baltic States."<sup>1</sup>

In the instructions which were given the following day to the Finnish delegation appointed to negotiate with Moscow, a number of concrete problems were mentioned. Besides emphasizing such general points as the inviolability of the frontiers, Finland's peaceful intentions, and the decision of the Finnish Republic to fight if attacked, the Finnish Government also instructed its delegates:

To reject the Soviet demand for naval bases and garrisons either in continental Finland or in the Aland Islands;

To reject all demands for the revision of the frontier on the Karelian isthmus;

To decline all Soviet requests for Finnish ports;

To express the readiness of the government to establish suitable railroad connections and transit facilities between Finland and Russia;

That the Finnish Government was ready to negotiate about specific islands in the Gulf of Finland (in the vicinity of Leningrad); and to cede to Russia three of these islands subject to a mutual arrangement;

That territorial compensations would be accepted in Eastern Karelia and in the region of the Arctic Ocean;

That, finally, Finland declined all "mutual assistance" of a

military nature similar to the clauses incorporated in the agreements between Russia and the other Baltic States.

This final point was a plain intimation that the Finnish Government desired to remain completely neutral in the struggle between the Great Powers.

When, on October 10, Paasikivi departed for Moscow the political situation in Finland was already tense. A large throng gathered at the railroad station to see the Finnish delegates off. As the train pulled out, the crowd broke into the Finnish song, "Never Shall Our Land Bow Before the Foreign Tyrant."<sup>2</sup> The news spread quickly throughout the country that Soviet troops were approaching the Finnish borders. The government, in turn, took certain measures of mobilization.

This state of tension did not affect Finland alone. The three Scandinavian states presented notes to Moscow expressing their hope that peaceful relations between Finland and Moscow would be continued. The United States Ambassador to Moscow, Laurence Steinhardt, transmitted a personal letter from President Roosevelt to the President of the U. S. S. R., Mikhail Kalinin, expressing confidence that "nothing will be done to mar the peaceful relations between the U. S. S. R. and Finland." Kalinin replied to the President's letter five days later with a long telegram which stated that "the negotiations were proceeding upon the principle of Finnish independence."

It is difficult to appraise the effect of these outside declarations upon the Moscow Government. It is doubtful whether they had any influence. At a somewhat later date Molotov gave a less diplomatic and more provocative reply to the American *démarche*:

"One might imagine that the relations between the United States of America and, let us say, the Philippines or Cuba, which have long been demanding independence without getting it, are better than those between the Soviet Union and Finland which long ago received its liberty and independence from the Soviet Union!"<sup>3</sup>

At a later date the Finnish Foreign Minister, Erkko, expressed the opinion that the interference of the United

States merely strengthened Stalin's anti-Finnish feelings.<sup>4</sup>

One interesting aspect of the Russo-Finnish negotiations was that the people of Russia were completely ignorant of them. The Soviet press continued to devote much space to Lithuania, Vilno, and so forth but published nothing about the Finnish situation until the end of October. Thus the knowledge of the reaction of outside powers toward the negotiations was confined to a narrow circle in the Kremlin and never reached the Soviet man-in-the-street.

In the meantime certain circles in Finland expected that Germany would come to their aid against Russia. But during the entire negotiations Germany remained aloof, and foreign correspondents reported from Helsinki that Finnish irritation was mounting, not only against Russia but also against the Germans.

The first conference took place on October 12 between Stalin, Molotov, and the Finnish delegation. In this conference as in all subsequent ones—there were eight altogether—of the Soviet delegates only Stalin played an active role; Molotov said little and displayed no initiative. "I had occasion to see," Paasikivi related in an interview with the correspondent of *Corriere della Sera* on October 20, that despite their revolution the Russians have not changed their habit of working at night. On the Russian side, besides Stalin and Molotov, the chief of Molotov's Cabinet and a colonel participated in the conferences. Stalin was at all times very gracious. Once he engaged me in a long conversation during which he spoke nostalgically of the time in 1906 when he took refuge in Finland to escape the Czarist police. He wore his usual white jacket buttoned up to the neck and a pair of boots. Voroshilov did not show up even once at the conferences. It was obvious that Stalin and Molotov considered themselves competent enough, even in military matters. At any rate they got along famously without the Marshal.

Vaino Tanner, a member of the second Finnish delegation, stated in an interview with the Copenhagen *Social-Democrat* published on October 27 that all negotiations were carried on by Stalin alone. He constantly paced the room while talking. Tanner asked his permission to speak

a language other than Russian and received in reply a curt "No!" According to the testimony of the Finnish Minister to the U. S. S. R., at the turning point in the negotiations Molotov acted like an "automaton," "as though he were merely executing someone else's orders."

"During our sojourn in Moscow," related Tanner, "we were followed at every step. Nowhere do they follow people so assiduously and thoroughly as in Moscow. Every time we left the conference hall we would be preceded by one Soviet automobile and followed by another."

The Soviet representatives did not submit a written memorandum at the first conference. This was merely an exploratory meeting to afford the delegates an opportunity to become acquainted with the general setup. Moreover, even before the conferences began, Russia had made a far-reaching proposal through which she sought to prepare the ground. This was the suggestion for a pact of mutual military assistance or, in other words, a military alliance. Thus the fatal question which had played such an important part in the Anglo-Russian negotiations during the months of May and June again came to the fore. During the earlier negotiations it had been referred to as a "guarantee of frontiers." This question, then, was familiar and clear to both Russian and Finnish representatives from the very outset of the negotiations.

Finland stuck to her view that a military alliance would inevitably lead to a Soviet invasion of the country, just as in the case of the other Baltic States, and her government rejected this proposal categorically. Paasikivi turned down not only Stalin's first proposal for full mutual assistance but also his second proposal for partial assistance.

At the second conference Stalin presented the Soviet proposals and demands in writing. This time the question of a military alliance was omitted. It was never raised again during the negotiations. (It only reappeared seven weeks later when the "alliance" signed by the Finnish Communist, Otto Kuusinen, in the name of a Finnish "People's Republic" was published by the Soviet press.)

The written Soviet demands were formulated as follows:

1. Finland is to lease the Port of Hankö to Soviet Russia, which will also receive the right to maintain there a garrison of up to 5,000 men.
2. Soviet Russia is to be granted the right to use the Port of Lappohja as an anchorage for Soviet naval forces
3. Finland is to cede to the Soviet Union five islands in the Gulf of Finland and 2,761 square kilometers of territory in the Karelian isthmus.
4. In return Soviet Russia will cede to Finland a territory of 5,529 square kilometers in the north.
5. The contracting parties agree not to enter into any international alliance aimed at the other contracting party.
6. The Finnish-Soviet border is to be demilitarized and all fortifications demolished.
7. The Soviet Union would not object to Finland's fortifying the Aland Islands, provided no other power participated in it.

Russia also demanded a readjustment of the frontier in the north, in the region of the Arctic Ocean.

Having received these proposals, the Finnish delegation returned to Helsinki immediately. The second delegation, which went to Moscow with the Finnish reply, included also Vaino Tanner, leader of the Finnish Social Democratic party and the future Minister of War during the Russo-Finnish conflict. Tanner played an important role in the negotiations.

On October 23 the Finnish delegation presented its counterproposals. In the preamble to the rather lengthy document the Finnish Government stated that it "was cognizant of the reasons that prompted the Soviet Union to strengthen the defenses of Leningrad" and that Finland, on her part, desirous of maintaining friendly relations with Russia, would seek to the best of her ability to satisfy the Soviet demands provided they did not conflict with the security and neutrality of the Finnish Republic.

Concretely Finland proposed:

1. To cede four islands in the Gulf of Finland in return for other territory.
2. To move the frontier in the vicinity of Leningrad to 13 kilometers from the existing line of demarcation, while rejecting all other Soviet demands in this connection, which actually went much further than this.

3. To reject the lease or cession of Hankö.
4. To reaffirm the existing agreement on neutrality should one of the parties become involved in war.

These counterproposals did not satisfy the Soviet Government. Only with regard to the region of Leningrad was Finland ready to compromise. Whereas Stalin sought to destroy the Mannerheim Line, Finland refused either to cede the territory or to destroy the fortifications.

The Soviet answer, likewise dated October 23, stated that Finland's counterproposals were insufficient. While the Soviet Union "did not insist on its original proposal for a pact of mutual assistance, since it did not wish to embarrass Finnish neutrality," it did insist on its right to secure and strengthen the Soviet borders. The Kremlin's reply once more raised the question of the Port of Hankö and demanded the cession of a larger strip of territory in the Karelian isthmus than the Finnish counterproposal had offered.

### 3. *In a Blind Alley*

The negotiations came to a standstill. The Finnish delegation returned once more to Helsinki for further consultation with its government. From this point on tension between the two countries increased. The Western Powers became alarmed. On October 28 President Roosevelt instructed the American Minister in Helsinki to inform him at once should the situation become aggravated. On the 26th the Finnish Foreign Minister, Erkko, delivered a cautious speech in which he stated that Finland "refuses to assume obligations which would permit other powers to make use of her territory for purposes which she considers incompatible with her neutrality." In declining to submit to foreign demands, "Finland, though small, insists that her views be taken into consideration when the question concerns her vital interests."<sup>5</sup>

Molotov stated the other side of the dispute in a speech on October 31 before the Supreme Soviet of the U. S. S. R. On this occasion he refrained from saber rattling but the mere fact of his having made public mention of the

Finnish problem was ominous in itself. Down to October 31 the Soviet press had said but little about the Soviet-Finnish negotiations. It had confined itself to a brief mention of the arrival of Paasikivi and Tanner in Moscow. Apparently Stalin was still keeping the way open for retreat. After Molotov's speech, however, retreat was no longer possible. Finland understood the gravity of the situation.

In his speech Molotov revealed that the Soviet Government had first offered Finland a mutual assistance agreement of the kind signed with the other Baltic States. Finland had declined this offer and the Soviet Government had not pressed her. He recited the whole course of Soviet-Finnish negotiations and ended on a threatening note: "We are confident that leading Finnish circles will correctly appraise the importance of improving Soviet-Finnish friendly relations and that the Finnish leaders will not submit to anti-Soviet pressure and provocations from whomever they may come."

The following day the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs informed Russia that Molotov's speech, delivered while conversations between the two countries were in progress, might complicate the further course of the negotiations and that Finland demanded strict adherence to the pacts previously signed, including the agreement on Soviet-Finnish frontiers and nonaggression. The latter obviously referred to the threat of war.

While Molotov was making his speech, the Finnish delegation was on its way back to Moscow. Upon reaching Leningrad the delegates were informed of the speech. They at once telephoned Helsinki for instructions. The Minister of Foreign Affairs told them to remain temporarily in Leningrad. Only after an all-night session of the Finnish Cabinet were they ordered to proceed to Moscow.

From this point on, relations between the two countries assumed a warlike character. On November 3 *Pravda* thundered that, "disregarding common sense, some Finnish leaders show no desire to reach an agreement to strengthen friendly relations between the Soviet Union and Finland." It also attacked the Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sandler, who had declared that all the Scandinavian

countries would be menaced if Finland should accede to the Soviet demands. "We shall send to the devil the game of the political card sharps," *Pravda* reported, "and go our own way regardless of what may happen."

In the meantime conversations between Russia and Finland continued. When it became clear, however, that Russia's chief demand concerned the Port of Hankö, whereas Finland would compromise on almost any point but Hankö, the negotiations ran into a blind alley.

At conferences which took place on November 3 and 4 the Finnish delegates submitted Helsinki's final counter-proposals. Finland categorically refused to compromise on Hankö and on the question of dismantling the Mannerheim fortifications. She did consent to cede more territory to Russia in the vicinity of Leningrad and in the eastern part of the Rybachı Peninsula, and also to give the Soviets a number of islands in the Gulf of Finland. This, however, did not solve the problem of Hankö which was uppermost in Stalin's mind. When, at the conference of November 4, the Finnish delegation held out resolutely against the lease or cession of Hankö, Stalin made one more effort and suggested that Finland sell the port to Russia. When this was rejected, he expressed his willingness to relinquish Hankö if Finland would give him six near-by islands. The islands asked for were similar in strategic position to Hankö and from them the Russians could have barred all egress to the Gulf of Finland. Stalin appealed to the interests of "weak Finland" which needed the protection of "large powers." Half hinting and half threatening, he said to the Finnish delegates, "Look what happened to Poland!"

Again the Finnish delegation asked for instructions from Helsinki. As though in answer to Stalin's threat, the Finnish Premier, Aimo Cajander, delivered a radio speech on November 4 in which he stated: "It is not sufficient to proclaim one's neutrality. One must know how to defend it. We are well aware of that. We have not asked anyone for advice and all our decisions have been arrived at independently . . . We shall defend our freedom and independence."



The same day Foreign Minister Erkkö declared that Finland had already accepted 75 per cent of Russia's demands and did not intend to submit further.

On November 9 the Finnish delegation submitted to Stalin a memorandum containing Finland's final answer: "Finland cannot grant a foreign power military bases either on its territory or within its borders."

"Stalin," relates Elliston on the basis of information received from members of the Finnish delegation, "noted the new finality in the Finnish instructions. *Nichevo nie podielayesh,*" he finally said. ("Nothing doing, eh?")<sup>6</sup>

This was in fact the Soviet declaration of war against Finland. Thus the long and tortuous conversations came to an end. The delegates never met again. On November 13 the Finnish delegation left Moscow, accompanied to the railroad station by a subordinate official of the Narkomindel.

In the meantime the Finnish Republic was preparing to defend itself. This was particularly true after Molotov's speech of October 31. The army was being mobilized. In Helsinki alone 100,000 men enrolled in the civil guard. Along the Russian border a half-million men lived in snow-buried tents. The capital too lay deep in snow. The streets were gashed by newly dug trenches. There were earthworks and shelters everywhere as protection against Russian airplanes. Helsinki looked like a city already under bombardment.<sup>7</sup>

The outside world was alarmed. Everywhere sympathy was being expressed for Finland, while the Soviet press intensified its attacks upon Finnish "warmongers." The Narkomindel accused Finland of raising the number of her divisions in the neighborhood of Leningrad from three to seven, thus demonstrating her warlike intentions.<sup>8</sup> *Pravda* wrote in the same spirit: "Helsinki is now on a war footing . . . The internal situation in the country is very grave. The war loan is unpopular . . . Finnish finances are strained . . . The government does not dare to inform the Diet of the Soviet proposals."

A few days later *Pravda* too struck a martial tone: "Government circles in Finland are *provoking* war against

the U. S. S. R. Finland is gripped by a war psychosis. The reactionary Finnish bourgeoisie wants war. Finnish militarists are publishing provoking articles." The Soviet papers had headlines like these: "Dissatisfaction of the Finnish people with their government is mounting" (November 24); "A clown as Premier of Finland" (November 26). And the Moscow radio reported: "The Finnish masses are in direct opposition to the ruling classes. They are suppressed by the most reactionary class, which is inciting the Finnish masses to dream of extending the Finnish frontiers to the Urals."<sup>9</sup>

The situation was rapidly nearing the breaking point.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE RUSSO-FINNISH WAR

#### I. *Soviet Foreign Policy Prior to the War with Finland*

**A**T the outbreak of the Russo-Finnish War Soviet political strategy was based on two main principles: the inevitability of Russia's becoming involved in the new World War and her complete isolation in the event of a conflict.

As the European war kept on spreading, the hope that it might be localized and speedily brought to a close grew dim. Moscow now looked forward to a long war, into which Russia too would eventually be drawn. The Kremlin was firmly convinced that in this war Russia would fight alone "in the midst of the capitalist encirclement." It had no faith in the "permanence" and "inviolability" of its pact with Germany, and in Soviet ruling circles few persons could have believed in the feasibility of a military alliance against Germany.

It is perhaps inevitable that the Soviets will be drawn into this war, the Kremlin argued. Perhaps it will be a war against "German Fascism" with the benevolent neutrality of the Western Powers. It is possible too that the Soviets might even have to face an Anglo-German bloc or a German-Japanese bloc simultaneously or at different periods. All possible combinations could not be predicted, but it is noteworthy that in all of them Germany figured as the opponent. At the same time the Kremlin had little faith in a lasting alliance with Great Britain, France, and the United States against Germany. Not only was such an alliance contrary to all Soviet concepts but, according to Moscow, the Anglo-Russian and Franco-Russian negotiations of 1939 had proved that it was impossible of realization.

Indeed, it was primarily the demands of strategy and defense, and not the desire to promote the world revolution

that had prompted the U. S. S. R. to embark on a program of territorial expansion. Once the possibility of outside military assistance was definitely ruled out, territorial expansion in the most endangered zones became its basic strategy in the period of prewar maneuvering. Time and again the problem must have presented itself to the Kremlin as a choice between military alliances or territorial acquisitions. The Kremlin put no trust in military alliances. It regarded them as unstable and illusory, preferring to rely upon its own strength. Eastern Poland, the Baltic States, and now Finland bore witness to these basic concepts of Soviet policy and strategy. This theory, preaching that Russia could survive only by increasing her military might, seemed to be confirmed by two decades of Soviet history.

The Soviet Government refused to see that the destruction of Poland also meant the elimination of a potential ally. It was unwilling to regard the defeat of France as a weakening of its own military position. It refused to recognize that the "second front" for which Russia would one day clamor was rapidly being eliminated. This fatal aberration was rooted deeply in the history and the very existence of Russian Communism.

A new term has come into general use during the present war: "nonbelligerence" or, as it was popularly referred to in the United States, a "nonshooting war." Italy was nonbelligerent during the first nine months of the present European conflict; her government insisted rather forcefully that she was not neutral. Technically not in the war, Italy was a member of the Axis. Her entire ideological and economic role was organically linked to Germany's strategy, limited, to be sure, by a number of minor conditions. One can equally well say that from the presidential elections of 1940 to December 7, 1941, the United States was a nonbelligerent. But can the same term be applied to the Soviet Union at the outbreak of its war with Finland? Russia was not a part of the German-led combination, even though she was extending aid to Germany. Her foreign policy, as a matter of fact, was not predicated upon an Axis victory. A victory of the Axis Powers represented

a greater danger to her than their defeat. On this score there was not the slightest doubt in Moscow.

Moscow pursued a policy peculiarly her own. It was neither neutral nor nonbelligerent. Soviet ruling circles were exceedingly proud of their clever foreign policy, designed to stretch out the "breathing spell" in which to prepare strategically and defensively for the inevitable war. In the Russian view, whatever the combination of anti-Soviet forces might be, Germany was bound to play the leading role in it. On land she had the mightiest military machine; in the Baltic Sea her fleet could operate alone or in combination with some other fleet. She was the prime enemy on land and on sea, and all of Russia's strategic preparations were directed against her. The "breathing spell" must be prolonged to prepare for war with Germany; but it could be prolonged only by virtue of the Russo-German Pact; so the agreement with Germany had to mask military preparations against Germany.

This paradox was the source of the misconceptions and debates that grew up around the "Russian enigma." Under the circumstances Russia's entire foreign policy was founded on major and minor diplomatic juggling, extremely complex and, it would seem, well suited to Stalin's own way of thought.

To postpone the break with Germany it was necessary to go on making far-reaching compromises with Berlin. Germany demanded economic aid, and Stalin decided to give it to her. Germany sought to increase her international prestige, to appear invincible, so as to be able to exert greater pressure on England; the illusion of a mighty "Soviet-German bloc" was an important item in this game. Stalin was willing to pretend to be a party to that, too. Did not Russia protest vehemently against the British blockade? Did not the Kremlin demand immediate peace? Did not the Communist International instruct its affiliated parties abroad to attack the "warmongers"? Germany, in turn, through her press and her diplomatic representatives, zealously propagated the might and stability of the "German-Soviet bloc." Upon Berlin's request the Kremlin severed diplomatic relations with some countries and made

friendly overtures to others. Although hardly entertaining the plan, Moscow never denied the German version that Russia had designs on the Middle East.\*

The fact was that both Berlin and Moscow believed in the inevitability of a break. Berlin was only too well aware that Stalin had no faith in the durability of the Russo-German Pact. All the articles and speeches about Russo-German friendship were merely a smoke screen camouflaging a feverish military activity. As for the U. S. S. R., this new concept of foreign policy—neither neutrality nor belligerency—gave rise to a confusion which only served to mar Russia's relations with the Great Powers and with the smaller countries. Trickery as an instrument of foreign policy led to failure even under conditions in which Russia could reasonably have hoped for positive gain. Because of these zigzags and diplomatic shows, the impression was created in the first two months of the war between the Allies and Germany that Russia was ideologically, militarily, and in every other way, identified with Germany. This impression was particularly strong in Western Europe and in the United States. Government circles in London and Washington, having better sources of information, were perhaps aware of the true state of affairs, but millions of newspaper readers saw merely the comedy that Berlin and Moscow were playing openly, and not what was going on behind the scenes.

This was particularly true when it came to the Finnish problem. Stalin's demands on Finland were dictated by

\* This led some people to believe all kinds of fairy tales. A distinguished foreign correspondent reported in the *New York Times* of February 2, 1940, that Germany was opening up a Bureau of the Comintern in Berlin. Moscow denied systematically only such rumors concerning the "German-Soviet bloc" as were dangerous to the foreign policy it was pursuing at the moment, as for instance the rumor of Russia's anti-Swedish tendencies, or of its plan to operate submarines in the Atlantic. In the meantime Berlin, not meeting any resistance on the part of the Soviet Government, was expatiating on the Kremlin's anti-British sentiments. On December 6 the *Völkischer Beobachter* published an article on the concentration of huge Soviet forces near the Turkish border in the Caucasus, analyzing the relative strengths of the Soviet and Turkish armies; it said in part "The campaigns of Alexander the Great, of Baber and Nadir, have inspired men like Napoleon I and Von der Goltz. The modern means of transportation makes such campaigns possible . . . The power able to do it is Russia." Foreign correspondents were invited to the Foreign Office in Berlin where an official called their attention to this article and commented upon it extensively. (*Posledniya Novosti*, December 8, 1939)

strategic reasons; of all the powers which could possibly threaten Russia, Germany held first place. Had the Soviet Government been able to state openly the reasons for its territorial demands upon Finland, had it been able to point to Germany as the main enemy, and had all this been placed within the framework of a different foreign policy, there is little doubt but that the anti-German states would have reacted more favorably to some of its demands.\* But having once become involved in a network of artifice, the Kremlin had to keep up the legend of a close-knit Soviet-German alliance. Thus, Russia had to mask her demands upon Finland as a precaution against British aggression. Germany, even though she gave only tacit assent to Russia's policy, played the game accordingly. As a result, when the Russo-Finnish War broke out Russia found herself in sharp conflict with England and France. At any moment this conflict might have been transformed into overt war.

## 2. *The Beginning of Hostilities*

On November 26, 1939, the long-expected "frontier incident" occurred. That day the Soviet Government sent a note to Finland charging that "on November 26, at 3.45 P.M.," Soviet troops, stationed on the Isthmus of Karelia at the Finnish border, near the village of Manila, "were suddenly subjected to artillery fire from Finnish territory." Altogether, seven shots were fired, and as a result three Red Army men and one junior commander were killed, and seven men and two commanders wounded.

Molotov's note further stated: ". . . the Soviet Government is constrained to place on record that concentration of Finnish troops near Leningrad not only creates a

\* On June 26, 1941, at the outbreak of the Soviet-German and Soviet-Finnish War the Moscow radio gave its explanation of the reasons for the first war with Finland in 1939 "The cause had been the presence in Europe of an aggressor, which had compelled the Soviet Union to seek security by reverting to the old policy of securing strategic positions. It was obviously not against Finland that the U. S. S. R. needed to take precautions, but it was realized that Germany could have used Finnish territory for an attack on the Soviet Union . . . It was Germany that the Soviet Union fought in Finland in 1940" (*Times*, London, June 27, 1941.)

menace for Leningrad, but in actual fact represents a hostile act against the U. S. S. R. and has already led to an attack on Soviet troops and to loss of life."

In view of this, the Soviet Government proposed to the Finnish Government that it withdraw its troops immediately to a distance of 25 kilometers from the frontier on the Isthmus of Karelia.

Helsinki categorically denied all guilt in the incident. It pointed out that the local post of frontier guards had made a note of the shots at the actual moment of the incident, but that the firing had occurred on the Soviet side of the border. "It seems possible," said the Finns, "that this may have been an accident." Rejecting Molotov's protest, the Finnish Government proposed that a mixed frontier commission be instructed to carry out a joint inquiry into the incident. Moscow rejected this proposal.

A realistic view of the situation leaves little doubt but that Molotov's accusations were an artificial creation and that the Finnish reply corresponded to the facts. The Finnish Government had no reason to provoke an armed conflict; it would have been only too happy to be left in peace. It was Russia who was making demands upon Finland, and the "frontier incident" was to serve as a pretext for Soviet military action.\*

Rejecting the Finnish proposal for a mixed "Frontier Commission of Inquiry," on November 28 Molotov also handed a note to the Finnish Minister in Moscow informing him that the U. S. S. R. considered itself released from all obligations under the Treaty of Nonaggression between the U. S. S. R. and Finland. The next day Moscow recalled its Envoy from Helsinki.

In the meantime in Helsinki the government was in continuous session. Some voices were even raised in favor of a unilateral solution of the incident—that the Finns should withdraw their troops a certain distance from the Soviet frontier without requesting a simultaneous withdrawal by

\* Spencer Williams, who had spent many years in Russia as representative of the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce, had this to say in a story in the *New York Times* of April 14, 1940 "The Moscow diplomats believed that it was Andre Zhdanov, the Soviet Crown Prince, who engineered the fake provocation on the Finnish frontier"



the Russian forces. President Kallio categorically opposed such a move. Nevertheless, the Finnish Government decided to offer one more compromise. It instructed the Finnish Minister to inform Molotov of its readiness to accede to the Soviet demand for withdrawal of its troops, and at the same time it requested that the Paasikivi-Stalin negotiations be reopened. On the night of November 29-30 the Finnish Envoy, Koskinen, sought an audience with Molotov. Neither the Foreign Commissar nor the Vice-Commissar, Potemkin, would receive him. Koskinen finally had to send the Finnish note to Molotov by courier. Nothing more was ever heard of it.

In the meantime Moscow was reporting a new "frontier incident." The Kremlin had cast the die. It was war. A "Revolutionary Finnish Government," operating ostensibly from Terijoki, a small town just inside the Finnish border, was set to issue its first proclamation "To the Finnish People."

The Soviet version of this entire affair was given by Molotov in his speech of November 29:

Men and women, citizens of the Soviet Union, the hostile policy pursued by the present government of Finland toward our country compels us to take immediate measures to insure the external security of our state . . . In recent days abominable provocations have been initiated by the Finnish militarists on the frontier between the Soviet Union and Finland, including even the firing of artillery on our troops near Leningrad, which caused great losses in the Red Army units . . . As you know from yesterday's note of the Soviet Government, they [the Finnish Government] replied to our proposals by a hostile refusal and a brazen denial of the facts, by a derisive attitude toward the victims we have lost, and by an undisguised striving to continue to keep Leningrad under immediate threat of their troops.

Molotov also informed the Russians of the new "frontier incident," of the fact that henceforth Russia considered herself released from the obligations incurred under the Nonaggression Pact between the U. S. S. R. and Finland, and of the recall of the Soviet diplomatic and commercial representatives from Helsinki.

That same morning, at 9.15, Soviet bombers dropped the first bombs on Helsinki, and at 9.30 Russian tanks and infantry crossed the Finnish border in the vicinity of Leningrad. The personnel of the Soviet legation, which was still in Helsinki, took refuge on a German steamer, the *Donau*, which was anchored in the harbor. Soviet bombers did not molest the *Donau*, which later took the Russians to Tallinn.

### 3. *Kuusinen's Government*

Russia did not follow up her military acts against Finland with a declaration of war. The Soviet Government had an entirely different plan, reminiscent of the period of the Russian Civil War, of 1918-20. A new Finnish Government, composed of Finnish Communist emigrants, long resident in Russia, was formed overnight. This "government" proclaimed the "overthrow of the Helsinki clique" and proceeded at once to conclude an agreement with the Government of the U. S. S. R. Theoretically, then, Russia was not at war with Finland even for a moment.\* The "Finnish People's Government" merely requested the Soviet Government for military assistance, and the Kremlin was only too willing to oblige a friendly neighbor.

A gleam of grim humor that relieved the tragedy of the situation was the declaration broadcast from Moscow on November 30 by the Communist party of Finland, a declaration which was issued, of course, not without Stalin's knowledge and censorship. In publishing the text the Moscow press announced blandly that its source of information was an "unknown radio broadcast" coming apparently from somewhere in Finland which the Russian newspapers had happened to intercept.

Otto Kuusinen, the Premier of the new Finnish People's Government, an active Finnish Communist who had resided in Russia for more than two decades, and a former Secretary of the Communist International, was referred to

\* On this ground the Soviet Government refused to permit the diplomats of any other state to take over the protection of Finnish interests in Soviet Russia.

by the Soviet press not as "Comrade" Kuusinen but as "Mister" (*Gospodin*) Kuusinen. This tendency on the part of the Kremlin to play up the independent role of Kuusinen runs throughout its "negotiations" with the Finnish People's Government.

Equally humorous was the official Tass communiqué of December 1, reporting that the Government of the U. S. S. R. had decided to "recognize" the Finnish People's Government.

On December 1 of this year the chairman of the Finnish People's Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs, M. Kuusinen, officially informed the Praesidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U. S. S. R. of the formation of the "People's Government of Finland" and requested the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Democratic Republic of Finland and the Soviet Union. The Praesidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U. S. S. R. has decided to recognize the People's Government of Finland and to establish diplomatic relations between the U. S. S. R. and the Democratic Republic of Finland.

This entire scheme had an old tradition behind it. The Soviet Government sought to avoid, as far as possible, being involved in the conventional type of international war. Communism always thought in terms of class wars, of revolutionary struggles against the forces of reaction. The victories of Bolshevism, particularly in the Russian Civil War, all its experience and political skills, had prepared it primarily for wars of this type.

Stalin was now acting exactly as Lenin had done two decades earlier, during the Communist revolt of 1918 in Finland. On January 28, 1918, a government had been formed in Helsinki, consisting of fourteen members with K. Manner as President and the very same Otto Kuusinen as People's Commissar of Education. This government advocated "a bourgeois-democratic revolution." On March 1, 1918, it signed an agreement with Russia for the purpose of "strengthening the ties of friendship and brotherhood between the two free republics." On April 29, upon the suppression of the Communist revolt, most members of this government had escaped to Moscow and had remained there ever since.

Similar tactics were pursued by Lenin two years later, during the Soviet-Polish War in 1920. Yulian Markhlevski, the President of the abortive "Revolutionary Government of Poland," relates in his book, *War and Peace between Bourgeois Poland and Proletarian Russia*, that on July 31, 1920, in the city of Bialystok, by agreement with the Russian Communist party, a Provisional Polish Revolutionary Committee was formed, consisting of Felix Dzerzhinsky, already the powerful head of the Soviet G. P. U., Felix Kon, E. Prukhniak, I. Unshlicht, and Y. Markhlevski as Chairman.\* "We committed an error," writes Markhlevski, "in not organizing this committee much earlier." To this mistake he attributed in part the subsequent failure of the Communist revolt in Poland and the war between Poland and the Soviets.

In this connection, one distinction must be pointed out. Both in the Soviet-Finnish War of 1918 and in the Soviet-Polish War of 1920 the formation of revolutionary governments was a concrete expression of real and active revolutionary movements. At that time Moscow believed that the entire world was in the throes of a social revolution and that any war in which the Soviet Union participated could be only a class war, a civil war. At the end of 1939, however, the situation was altogether different. There was no revolutionary situation in the Finland of 1939. If Stalin nevertheless decided to form a "People's Government" made up of Finnish Communist exiles, it was for altogether different reasons. To begin with, its purpose was partly to prove to the outside world, particularly to the workers, that the Soviet remained true to its traditions and, partly, to appease those "Old Bolsheviki" who never tired of accusing Stalin of having betrayed "the revolutionary principles of Communism." The Kremlin also sought by this means to evoke pro-Soviet and antipatriotic sentiments among the Finnish workers. Subsequent events showed that the extent of pro-Soviet sentiments among the Finnish population had been greatly overestimated in Moscow.

\* Similar tactics were employed by Lenin in Outer Mongolia in 1921.

There was another important consideration which prompted the Kremlin to form Kuusinen's puppet government. The complete defeat of Finland would inevitably have led to the sovietization of the entire country, as had been the case in Eastern Poland. But this result would have been contrary to the Russo-German agreement on their "spheres of interests." Stalin was faced with a dilemma. Should he maintain the status quo in Finland as he had done in the other Baltic States, and thus fulfill his obligation to Berlin? This would have been possible, and was undoubtedly considered for a time by the Kremlin, in case Finland submitted without war. But Russia and Finland were now actually at war. Under these new circumstances the Soviet Government could not set as the ultimate aim of its military campaign such relatively minor questions as the acquisition of three or four bases in Finland and minor changes in the Finnish boundary. Hence Stalin had need of a government in whose name he could proceed to make internal changes in Finland which he could not publicly accomplish by ukase from Moscow.

The declaration of the Finnish Communist party on November 30 cited seven cases, between 1919 and 1939, of Finnish preparations for an aggressive war against Russia.

Our country was a nest of anti-Soviet intrigues. Ministers, army staff officers, together with Swedish bankers and imperialists of the Great Powers, in common with anti-Soviet adventurers, cooked up all kinds of schemes against the U. S. S. R.

. . . Why did the Finnish Government refuse to accept the agreement proposed [by the Soviet Government]?

. . . Why did the Finnish Government decline to withdraw its frontier in the Karelian Isthmus?

. . . Why did the government refuse to adopt more thorough-going measures [as Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania had done] in order to regulate satisfactorily relations between Finland and the U. S. S. R.?

. . . Remove the bankrupt government! Throw it off the backs of the people!

We must create an all-embracing workers' and people's front, consisting of workers, peasants, artisans, small traders, and toiling intellectuals. Power must be vested in a government

that will rely for support on the broad people's front of toilers—a People's Government.

As a sop to the prodemocratic elements in Finland, and to appease public opinion abroad, the declaration also included the following significant statements:

Some comrades think that we must demand the immediate establishment of a Soviet regime in Finland. They are wrong. Without the consent of the peasantry, without the consent of the Finnish Diet this question cannot be settled. Others think that Finland should become an integral part of the U. S. S. R. They, too, are mistaken . . .

The "vast program of social improvements" advocated in this declaration included among other things:

Immediate peace, the conclusion of a Soviet-Finnish pact of mutual assistance, annexation by Finland of Soviet Karelia, the creation of a People's Army, the institution of state control over banks and large industrial enterprises, an eight-hour working day, confiscation of all lands belonging to big landowners, exemption of the small peasants from payment of income tax arrears and the democratization of the state organization, administration, and courts.

On questions relating to the war and the Red Army, the declaration stated:

The Red Army is invincible!

Soldiers of the Finnish Army, beware of aiding this hopeless military adventure of the Mannerheims. You shall soon witness the end to the resistance of the White Guard General Staff.

Why are we so convinced of our ultimate victory, and why did we suffer defeat in 1918?

In answer to this last question the declaration points out that, to begin with, in 1918 there was no Communist party to speak of, and, secondly, the "foreign imperialists" in those years had been able to "send troops to the aid of the Finnish hangmen because the Soviet Union was weak. Now the contrary is true."

A careful perusal of this document showed that what it omits was even more significant than what it said. In enumerating "seven cases of Finnish preparation for

aggressive war" against Russia the declaration begins with the year 1919, avoiding any mention of the most important and the only actual conflict which had taken place between Russia and Finland—the struggle in 1918, when Germany dispatched troops to the aid of the Finnish "hangmen." Germany is not once mentioned in the "seven cases" cited.

Equally considerate of Germany's feelings is the argument against the sovietization of Finland. "Some comrades think that we must demand the immediate establishment of a Soviet regime in Finland." This question had never been debated seriously in Finland. As for Moscow, there could be no two views on this matter, since the whole question had arisen in the month of November, 1939, and Stalin's decision upon questions of this type was final. Actually it was a delicate hint to Germany that, even though Russia was at war with Finland, she would nevertheless remain true to her obligations to Germany—that Russia would neither annex nor sovietize Finland.

Another declaration, this time issued by the "People's Government of Finland," and likewise "received" in Moscow by radio and "translated" from the Finnish, dealt with future Soviet-Finnish relations:

. . . The People's Government of Finland, being deeply convinced that the Soviet Union pursues no aims contrary to the independence of our country, fully approves and supports actions by the Red Army on the territory of Finland. It regards them as invaluable assistance to the Finnish people on the part of the Soviet Union . . .

. . . the People's Government of Finland invites the Government of the U. S. S. R. to render the Democratic Republic of Finland all necessary assistance by the Red Army forces.

For participation in the joint struggle, hand in hand with the heroic Red Army of the U. S. S. R., the People's Government of Finland has already formed the First Finnish Army Corps, which, in the course of the forthcoming battles, will receive reinforcements by volunteers from among the revolutionary workers and farmers, and which must become the strong backbone of the future People's Army of Finland. To the First Finnish Army Corps will be accorded the honor of carrying the banner of Finland's Democratic Republic into the capital and of raising it over the Presidential Palace to the joy of the toiling people and to the awe of the enemies of the people.

. . . The People's Government desires to maintain friendly relations with other states. It recognizes Finland's economic and financial obligations toward other states . . .

. . . Tanner, like Cajander, is an enemy of our people. Tanner's government is no jot better, but rather worse, than Cajander's government.

. . . Drive the hangmen as far as possible from Finland . . .

Arise, long-suffering, toiling people of Finland! Rise to the courageous fight against the tyranny of your oppressors and hangman. Arise all citizens to whom the future of our country is dear! . . .

This document, dated at "the town of Terijoki, December 1, 1939," was signed by Otto Kuusinen, Chairman of the People's Government and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland; Mauri Rosenberg, Vice-Chairman and Minister of Finance; Aksel Antilla, Minister of Defense; Ture Lehen, Minister of Internal Affairs; Armas Eykiya, Minister of Agriculture; Inkori Lehtinen, Minister of Education; and Paavo Prokkonen, Minister of Karelian Affairs.

The People's Government, which had proclaimed its existence on November 30, two days later signed an agreement with the U. S. S. R. This agreement, composed somewhat hurriedly and carelessly, was an imitation of the already existing agreements between Russia and the Baltic States.

According to article 1 of this agreement, the "Soviet Union expresses its consent to the transfer to the Democratic Republic of Finland of the districts of Soviet Karelia with a predominating Karelian population, amounting altogether to 70,000 square kilometers, which territory will be included in the state territory of the Democratic Republic of Finland." Thus Russia was ceding practically half of the Karelian Soviet Republic.\* If we stop to consider that during his conversations with Paasikivi and Tanner Stalin had been willing to transfer to Finland, in exchange for Finnish bases and territory, exactly 5,529 square kilometers, it becomes obvious that this generous increase in territory ceded to 12½ times the original offer

\* The entire area of the Karelian Soviet Republic was 147,000 square kilometers.



was intended to serve as an argument to strengthen the People's Government.\* On the other hand, the People's Government agreed to "a certain shifting" of the frontier in the Isthmus of Karelia north of Leningrad and to the transfer to the Soviet Union of territory amounting in all to 3,970 square kilometers.

The Soviet Union also agreed to pay Finland 120,000,000 Finnish marks in compensation for the railway lines in the section of the Karelian isthmus to be transferred to the U. S. S. R. The People's Government further consented, in the "mutual interests of the consolidation and security of the U. S. S. R. and of Finland," to lease to the Soviet Union for a term of 30 years the Hankö Peninsula and surrounding waters to a radius of 5 miles south and east and of 3 miles west and north, and to sell outright to Russia 5 islands in the Gulf of Finland (Suusaari, Seiskaari, Lavansaari, Tutersaari, and Koivisto) and parts of the peninsulas of Rybachi and Sredni on the coast of the Arctic Ocean—all for the sum of 300,000,000 Finnish marks. The Soviet Union and the "Democratic Republic of Finland" also undertook to render each other every assistance, including military. This clause was a repetition of the agreement concluded between Russia and the Baltic States. The "treaty" also included a stipulation that the contracting parties conclude a commercial convention as soon as possible, in order to "raise the annual trade turnover between the two countries considerably above the level of 1927, when it had reached the maximum figure of 800,000,000 Finnish marks."

This, in short, was the essence of the Molotov-Kuusinen "agreement." On the day it was published the Russo-Finnish War was already going full blast. The attention of the entire world was glued to the Russo-Finnish front and little thought was given to the People's Government or its agreements.

In Russia, however, these agreements with Kuusinen were accepted as the ideological basis for prosecuting the

\* In 1918 the Soviet Government had promised to the Revolutionary Finnish Government a part of the Rybachi Peninsula. When the Soviet Government finally recognized the legally constituted Finnish Government, it was obliged to keep this promise

war. "Friendship and Peace" was the slogan applied to the Russo-Finnish events in a resolution passed by the Krasny Oktiabr factory on December 2. "The U. S. S. R. respects the independence and the freedom of the small states," echoed the "Leningrad Plant named for Zhdanov." Commenting officially on the negotiations with Kuusinen, *Pravda*, too, emphasized that this was not a war between Russia and Finland but the consolidation of peace between them.

The Red Army is approaching Finland's borders at the request of the Finnish People's Government. As soon as the People's Government requests it, it will leave Finnish territory.

The Red Army is going to Finland to aid the Finnish people.

Only the Soviet Union, which rejects in principle the forcible seizure of territory and the enslavement of peoples, could consent to lend its military might, not for aggression against Finland and for the enslavement of her people, but to secure Finnish independence, to increase the territory of Finland at the expense of the Soviet Union—to establish *friendly relations* with Finland.<sup>1</sup>

The Kuusinen "government" never functioned. There is even some doubt as to whether it ever left Moscow or set foot in Terijoki. In the beginning the Soviet press informed its readers of the "warm response" by the Finnish workers to the declaration of the People's Government of Finland. On December 4 *Pravda* reported that the "workers, peasants, and toiling intellectuals of Finland received with great enthusiasm the announcement of the formation of the People's Government of Finland." Afterward such reports dwindled.

Within Russia people were not unaware of this state of affairs. The Moscow correspondent of the *New York Times* reported on December 27, 1939: "They say in Moscow that 'it seems the Finns are not at all against the White Regime, as we had thought!'"

#### 4. *A Local War?*

Moscow was firmly convinced that the Russo-Finnish conflict would be merely a "local" war, and that within

three days, at most a week, Finland would be brought to her knees. "Everyone in Moscow, from Stalin down, thought that the Red Army would be in Helsinki a week after the attack started. . . . The councillor of the Soviet Embassy in Berlin told me a few days before the fighting began," reports William Shirer in *Berlin Diary*, "that 'it will be all over in three days.'"<sup>2</sup>

At the opening of hostilities the Russo-Finnish War was looked upon as an operation to be executed by the wing of command of the Leningrad district. The Soviet forces involved in the first attack were not large, and all communiqués on the progress of military operations were issued from Leningrad.

The Soviet attack was carried out in three directions: in the Karelian isthmus, in the direction of Petsamo, and in the center of Finland, in order to cut the country in two. In the first few days the Red forces achieved some minor victories.

Leningrad was more affected by the outbreak of hostilities than any other part of Russia. It was through Leningrad that the troops passed on their way to the front and the wounded returned. After the first few days of fighting a blackout was ordered in the city, and any violation of it was prosecuted severely by the authorities.

In Moscow, however, nothing was changed. Newspapers wrote little about the war. Even after a blackout had been decreed many houses failed to comply, and the drivers of automobiles did not trouble to dim their lights. Judging by the size of the forces involved and by the space which the "incident" received in the Soviet press, the feeling was general that the Russo-Finnish War was merely a minor military conflict.

In contrast, the foreign press, particularly in the democratic countries, was continually publishing exaggerated reports about the poorly clad Red Army, its lack of adequate supply facilities, its defective bombs, etc. The time of year chosen for the attack was, so far as foreign opinion was concerned, just another indication of the incapacity of the Soviet High Command. Germany's conquest of Poland in three weeks was still fresh in everyone's memory.

Indeed, the inefficiency demonstrated by the Red Army during the first stages of the war was due to the lack of experienced military leadership and divided authority, which resulted in poor strategy.\* This was subsequently admitted by Moscow, too.

In the meantime diplomatic attempts were being made from various quarters to put an end to the conflict. On December 1 Laurence Steinhardt, United States Ambassador in Moscow, had a conference with Molotov, during which he mentioned President Roosevelt's concern over the bombardment of Finnish cities. Both Washington and Helsinki hoped that Russo-Finnish negotiations might yet be renewed and the conflict speedily terminated. Molotov's reply was wholly negative. He stated that President Roosevelt's concern was based upon a wrong impression, since Soviet planes "were bombarding only aerodromes." This was in line with the ironic statement which he had made previously, in his speech on November 29 in reference to the strained relations between the U. S. S. R. and the United States, that "America, being about 8,000 kilometers away from Finland, may not be aware of this fact." At this interview Molotov also told Ambassador Steinhardt that "the Soviet Union expected little that was positive from Tanner's new government. Had Finland negotiated through Paasikivi alone, without the participation of Tanner, it might have been possible to reach an understanding satisfactory to both sides." Finally, as if to put a stop once for all to any attempt by third parties to bring the war to an end, Molotov added that the "formation of the People's Government had introduced an entirely new and important element into the situation."

Two days later the Finnish Government made another attempt to renew negotiations with Moscow, this time through the good offices of the Swedish Minister to Russia. Again Molotov replied that the U. S. S. R. did not recog-

\* "There is little doubt," wrote Walter Duranty (*The Kremlin and the People*, p 59) "that part of the Red Army's failure in Finland was due to the divided authority" between the High Command and the Political Department

"The Soviet Army had never prepared for a war against Finland, and no plans for this have been made" (Maxim Litvinov's address in New York, June 22, 1942)

nize "the so-called Finnish Government which has already left Helsinki for parts unknown."\* The Soviet Government, he stated, "recognizes only the People's Government of the Democratic Republic of Finland."

Finally, the German Ambassador in Moscow assumed the functions of peacemaker. According to the Italian *Telegrafo* of December 9, he visited Molotov in a "private capacity" and suggested that Russia renew diplomatic negotiations with Helsinki. Molotov refused categorically.

All these efforts having failed, Finland decided to take one more step toward negotiating peace. On December 15 Vaino Tanner broadcast a speech in Russian calling upon Moscow to renew negotiations. He promised far-reaching concessions. Tanner reminded the Russian people of Stalin's own words which he had seen displayed on one of the public buildings in Moscow: "The Soviet Union covets not one inch of foreign territory, but will defend to the last every inch of its own territory." "*Gospodin* Molotov," Tanner exclaimed, "how can you reconcile these lofty principles with your shameless attack upon little, peace-loving Finland?" The people of Finland, Tanner stated unequivocally, would also fight to the last to defend their territory, but they "are ready to renew negotiations and even to agree to substantial concessions."

Moscow was adamant. To demonstrate once again its contempt for the legal Finnish Government, it imposed all sorts of indignities upon the Finnish diplomatic personnel, which had not yet left Moscow. For instance the Finnish Envoy was deprived of fuel, of his telephone, and even of newspapers for which his subscription had been paid in full.

Count von der Schulenburg, the German Ambassador, who was at that time the dean of the diplomatic corps in Moscow, informed the various foreign representatives that, in order to maintain strict neutrality, the members of the diplomatic corps should not see the departing Finns off at the railroad station. His advice was heeded by the Axis diplomats, and also by those who were in any way dependent on Moscow—Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Ru-

\* Molotov's assertion was not true to fact

mania, Bulgaria, for example—but the anti-Axis diplomats put in their appearance in full force.

### 5. *Defeats and Victories*

By the middle of December it was clear that the setback which the Russians had been undergoing on the Finnish front, and which the Kremlin had at first refused to take seriously, had become general in character. Helsinki reported a number of Russian defeats, but the Soviet press took no cognizance of them and avoided commenting on the war altogether. The brief Russian communiqués kept repeating laconically that the situation at the front was unchanged.

The censorship of dispatches to foreign countries, which had been abolished on Molotov's becoming People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, was reinstated. The foreign press continued to enlarge on successive Soviet defeats, on disorder and dissatisfaction in the ranks of the Red Army, on defective bombs and ammunition, on poor coördination of the Soviet military command, and so forth. No doubt many of these reports were exaggerated, there were too many facile generalizations. But facts were incontestable. The Red Army was retreating before the underequipped forces of little Finland. Soviet military prestige was declining.

The war which was to have been over in three days or a week was dragging on. Worse still, all "revolutionary prospectives" which were linked up with this "little" war had come to naught by mid-December. If Finland was to have served as the symbol of a revolutionary situation throughout Europe, and perhaps throughout the world, it was giving a gloomy answer to Moscow's great question of the hour. All this became abundantly clear in December. From December 16 to the 21st, which was Stalin's sixtieth birthday, all questions of everyday life, of world affairs, and even of Soviet affairs disappeared from the pages of the Soviet press. There was only one topic, as far as the Russian newspapers were concerned: "Stalin is our Banner," "Stalin is our Happiness," "Stalin inspires the Soviet

Patriots to Heroic Deeds," "Stalin, the Sun that Shines upon Humanity." Apparently with the European and particularly the Russo-Finnish War in mind, Marshal Voroshilov wrote in *Pravda*: "Our armed forces will defeat any opponent, for we have with us Stalin."

Stalin also received a lengthy address from the so-called "First Corps of the Finnish People's Army," signed by twelve "Fighters and Commanders of the First Corps." The "great friend of the Finnish people" was greeted in the name of 5,775 fighters and commanders of the Red Army. The address ended with these flaming words: "Greetings to you, great friend and liberator of the Finnish People!"

Of particular interest were the congratulatory messages received from abroad. Except for those which were dependent upon Moscow or had concluded agreements with Russia, few governments took cognizance of Stalin's birthday. The Baltic States, of course, sent messages of congratulations; the Turkish Foreign Minister, Saracoglu, greeted "His Excellency Joseph Stalin"; there was a message from Chiang Kai-shek and from the Nazi-appointed President of the "Slovak Republic," who, as yet unschooled in protocol, sent his congratulations to "President Joseph Stalin."\* The Shah of Persia apparently missed the moment, and his message of congratulations did not arrive until New Year's Eve.

Hitler congratulated Stalin, but his message was stereotyped, trite, and said little. Von Ribbentrop's telegram, on the other hand, was more expansive:

Remembering those historic hours in the Kremlin which laid the foundation for the decisive turn in the relationship between our two great peoples and thus created the basis for a long and lasting friendship, I beg you to accept on your sixtieth birthday my warmest congratulations.

Stalin's replies to all these messages were polite but commonplace. Von Ribbentrop, however, received a telegram which has by now become historic:

\* At that time Stalin held no official post in the Soviet Government. He was merely the Secretary General of the Communist party of the Soviet Union.

The friendship of the peoples of Germany and of the Soviet Union, cemented by blood, will long remain firm.

After reporting day in and day out that there was no change at the Finnish front, the Soviet communiqués announced for the first time on January 9 that Soviet "troops have retreated several kilometers." Moscow was irritated. Mikhail Kaganovich, People's Commissar for Aviation and brother of the all-powerful Lazar Kaganovich, was deposed. At the same time the military staff of the Leningrad district, which was in direct charge of the Finnish operations, released a number of statements criticizing the way in which Soviet military operations were being reported in the foreign press. They cited few facts, however, and shed little light on the situation.

To weaken the impact of the Russo-Finnish military stalemate and to underscore its faith in the ultimate victory of the Red forces, the Supreme Soviet of the U. S. S. R. now published a long list of soldiers and officers who had received decorations for deeds of heroism "in the war against the Finnish White Guards." More than 2,000 men were thus rewarded.

The Helsinki radio made periodic broadcasts in Russian to the Red forces, urging them to surrender or to go over to the side of Finland. Finnish planes, of British or Italian makes, dropped leaflets on Leningrad, offering the Red Army soldiers 100 rubles for a revolver, 150 for a rifle, 10,000 for a tank, and \$10,000 for an airplane. The Soviet commanders countered with propaganda of their own.

In the middle of January Russia began feverish preparations for an all-out offensive. New and better-equipped regiments were dispatched to the front, and also more competent officers. During the first days of February the Soviet offensive was opened in the Karelian isthmus. Henceforth until the end of the war the victories were on the Soviet side. On February 9 the Red Army dented the Mannerheim Line, and in the first days of March it reached the city of Viipuri (Vyborg). The Finns lost heavily during these engagements. According to the Finnish generals, their army lost more men in the first days of March than during the entire three months preceding.



In England and France the tendency was to overestimate the ability of the Finnish Army to withstand the Russians. But the Finns, despite repeated Soviet defeats, knew that their situation was critical. In the middle of January General Mannerheim informed London and Paris that he would need 30,000 more men in the spring. As subsequent events have shown, even Mannerheim was mistaken. He needed much more help, and much sooner. Mannerheim's adjutant put the situation in a nutshell: "A man fell from the fortieth floor, but when he reached the twentieth he informed the spectators: 'Thus far I am still in good health.'"

On February 13 the spokesman of the Finnish General Staff declared: "We need help. We need more men, more guns, more airplanes. Thus far Finland has been able to hold on, but we rely on other civilized nations to do their utmost to relieve us from this situation."<sup>3</sup>

According to information from Rome, Finland officially requested from France and England on February 21 not only 500 bombers and pursuit planes, 100,000 men, all types of military equipment, but even workers.<sup>4</sup>

With each day that the Red Army advanced, the situation of the Finnish troops became more and more tragic. General Oesterman, Mannerheim's predecessor as Commander in Chief of the Finnish Army, resigned. So did Generals Oesth and Wallenius. The Finnish Press did not report these resignations.

### 6. *The Russo-Finnish War and the League of Nations*

Immediately following Russia's attack on Finland, Helsinki decided to appeal to the League of Nations. On December 3 Rudolf Holsti, the Finnish representative, in Geneva, requested the League's secretary, M. Avenol, to call a special session of the League Assembly to take action on Russia's aggression. Holsti based his request upon articles 11 and 15 of the League Covenant. Neither the preliminary discussions nor the decisions at this session influenced in any way the subsequent development of political events. Nevertheless, this short session is of great signifi-

cance since at that crucial moment in history it reflected all the difficulties and failures of European politics.

Avenol at once informed the members of the League of Nations, including Soviet Russia, of Holsti's request. He did not have to wait long for a reply from Russia. On the following day he received Molotov's outright refusal. "The Soviet Union," Molotov's telegram said, "is not at war with Finland and does not threaten the Finnish people. The Soviet Union maintains peaceful relations with the Democratic Republic of Finland. The people in whose name Holsti appeals to the League are not the real representatives of the people of Finland." Under the circumstances, stated Molotov, Russia could not participate in this session.

In requesting a meeting of the League, the Finnish Government was prompted by a number of motives. But above all it hoped that the League, in whose work Russia had taken an active part over the past few years, might be instrumental in putting a stop to the war.

Upon the outbreak of the European war, the League had had to refrain from political action since, among other reasons, the Government of Switzerland, which was in mortal fear of a conflict with Germany, insisted that the League, which was functioning on Swiss territory, remain completely passive. Switzerland, to be sure, could not prevent the League from holding its session in December, when the question of the Russo-Finnish conflict came up. But even this session was hedged about with all sorts of restrictions. Special passes were issued for all those who participated in it, and the League of Nations building was surrounded by a strong police force, which the Geneva correspondents at once dubbed the "Avenol Line." Although trouble had been anticipated, everything went off peacefully despite the fact that fifteen German correspondents sat right next to the French and British press. The Soviet Envoy in Paris, Jacob Suritz, arrived in Geneva for a few days' stay solely to obtain information, and left before the League had completed its work.

The session was opened on December 11. Rudolf Holsti delivered a long speech, which apparently made a strong

impression upon the assembled diplomats. Avenol then informed the session that he had telegraphed to Moscow three times but had received a reply to only one of his telegrams. The session then decided to elect a commission to study Holsti's charges.

From the very outset it became clear that it would be a difficult problem to elect this commission. The neutral European countries which participated in the session were frightened. Many of them were neighbors of Russia and had good reason to be afraid. Germany, in turn, was taking every measure to terrorize any neutral which displayed some independence of German policy. Only countries which were far removed from either Germany or Russia took a positive stand. The result was that the most militant and most highly principled position in the entire Russo-Finnish matter was taken by the South American delegates!

The representatives of Afghanistan and Iran, Soviet Russia's neighbors, did not even put in an appearance at this session. The delegates of the Baltic countries remained very much in the background. Holland and the Scandinavian countries were completely passive. Hence, although it was proposed that the commission should have fifteen members, only thirteen delegations were found to be willing to serve. It was decided that the commission should be limited to thirteen. Of these, as *Pravda* later pointed out, nine were representatives of countries which had no formal diplomatic relations with Russia. As the noted French journalist Stéphane Lauzanne reported from Geneva to the *Matin* on December 12:

The courage of the neutrals is inversely proportional to their distance from the lair of the beast. The Scandinavians say: "It is better to help Finland than to judge the Soviet Union." The Balkans ask: "Will this criticism of Russia extinguish the flame?" But the South Americans are angry. They say indignantly: "We are sick and tired of actions which paralyze justice."

At its first conference the committee of thirteen decided to invite the Soviet Union to put an immediate end to all

military action against Finland and to send a representative to Geneva. Molotov declined, citing the same reasons he had given in his telegram of December 4 to Avenol. The next step open to the Commission was to proceed according to the statutes of the League of Nations. The Commission proposed to the Assembly a resolution saying that the League of Nations solemnly condemns the action taken by the U. S. S. R. against Finland and appeals to every member of the League to extend to Finland all material and humanitarian aid, each according to his ability. The members of the League are asked to refrain from any action that might weaken Finland's powers of resistance . . . The Assembly recommends to the Council of the League to pronounce upon the question . . .

On December 14 ten members of the League (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, China, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Switzerland, and the Netherlands) which were in one way or another dependent on Russia or Germany made different kinds of reservations. Mexico, too, made its reservations.

On the same day the Council of the League adopted a resolution that "the Council of the League of Nations finds that by its own actions the Soviet Union has expelled itself from the League of Nations."

With this the session of the League came to an end. A feeling of profound dissatisfaction pervaded all League circles. Everyone realized that, as far as aid to Finland was concerned, little of a practical nature had been achieved. On the other hand, the fear and the passive attitude of a large number of states were a sign of the complete disintegration and paralysis of the very agency that had been created for the collective struggle against aggression. This was the last official session of the League of Nations.

As was to be expected, the Soviet Government reacted vehemently to the League's move. "In Soviet circles," Tass reported, "the League's decision evoked an ironical smile." Chiding England and France for having "recently refused Germany's peace proposals," Tass denied to these "imperialist powers" the right to accuse anyone of aggressive aims. Reiterating that Russia was not fighting Finland

but "the bankrupt Mannerheim clique," the Soviet news agency, returning once more to the subject of Germany, stated:

Instead of acting to terminate the war between Germany and the Anglo-French bloc, the present membership of the League of Nations is now striving to fan the flames of war in the north-east of Europe.

In the final analysis Russia can only gain as a result of this action: she is freed from all moral responsibility for the infamous deeds of the League, and henceforth the Soviet Union will have full freedom of action.

The comments of the Soviet newspapers were in a similar vein. They pointed out that the closed session of the League had been attended by the American Vice-Consul, Edgar, and the representative of the "nonexisting Polish state," Gralinski. "The League of Nations," concluded the *Pravda* editorial, "from an instrument of peace has become an instrument of war, a weapon of the Anglo-French military bloc."

### 7. *The Reaction of World Opinion*

Outside Russia, down to the very outbreak of hostilities, the consensus of opinion was that the Soviet Union, which had recognized Finland's independence, would not go to war. Now that Germany had halted its military operations for the winter months, all attention was focused upon Russia. The indignation of the neutral countries against the Soviet was mounting. Russia, which had seized a part of Poland, had occupied military bases in the three Baltic States, and was presently pointing its guns at Finland, now held the center of the political stage. Inasmuch as the Kremlin, to all intents and purposes, had Berlin's silent acquiescence in its actions, belief was prevalent that there was a strong Russo-German military alliance.

Practically every country with the exception of Germany extended some degree of aid to Finland. Sympathy for her was universal. It was expressed in public collections of money, in mass meetings, and so forth. It also brought to the surface the universal widespread indignation against

Moscow's policies, an indignation which had never before been so bitter. The motives of the various states in coming to the aid of Finland were, to be sure, not entirely altruistic. Each government looked at the Russo-Finnish War from its own point of view: How could that war be exploited to promote its own foreign policies?

Sweden was the first country to send supplies to Finland—in all 8,500 volunteers, 84,000 rifles, 517 machine guns, and other help.<sup>5</sup> Italy sent some airplanes and, to a limited extent, other types of supplies. General Franco sent a shipload of military equipment, consisting mainly of rifles, furnished by Italy during the civil war in Spain. At the beginning of the war the United States sold Finland 40 military planes, but otherwise American aid was limited to the collection of money and the supplying of credits. Ninety per cent of all funds sent to Finland came from the United States. South America sent some airplanes. Australia provided £10,000.<sup>6</sup> England and France supplied Finland systematically with ammunition and other military equipment. According to official French data published at the beginning of March, England and France had given Finland 500 airplanes, including 67 bombers; 916 large guns with 2,300,000 shells; 5,000 grenades; 124 machine guns; 150 antitank guns; 450 grenades; 1,500 sea-mines; 10,000 antitank mines, and 56,000,000 shells. About 8,000 British and other volunteers were to have gone to Finland, but the war ended before they reached their destination.<sup>7</sup>

### 8. *Germany*

Throughout the Russo-Finnish War Germany maintained a strict neutrality. Before the outbreak of the war, while negotiations between Moscow and Helsinki were still going on, the German press had apparently received no instructions from above as to the stand it should take, outside of affirming Nazi friendship for Russia. Thus the German papers differed in some degree as to the tone and emphasis which they gave to Russo-Finnish affairs. While the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* wrote on November 5 that Soviet demands upon Finland were "very moderate," the

equally influential *Kölnische Zeitung* was in favor of the Finns "who were ready to destroy their capital but not to submit" (November 6).

As the Russo-Finnish conflict approached the zero hour, however, the Auswärtiges Amt began to coordinate the comments of the German press. On November 27 Berlin announced officially that "the conflict does not concern Germany." An effort was now made to point to Russia as the righteous party to this dispute. The *Dienst aus Deutschland*, official organ of the Auswärtiges Amt, wrote on November 28: "A power of the rank of the U. S. S. R. cannot be denied the right to secure an outlet to the sea and to take all necessary measures for the defense of its country."

From this point on, that is, from the beginning of Russo-Finnish hostilities, pro-Finnish voices were silenced in Berlin, for to be openly pro-Finnish now meant to be anti-Soviet. On November 28 the *Völkischer Beobachter* went so far as to give credence to the Finnish "border incident" and to accuse the Finns of being "in a state of dangerous nervousness." "According to Russian reports," wrote the *Beobachter*, "Finnish artillery opened fire upon Russian troops. Let us all hope that counsels of wisdom will prevail."

When Moscow broke off diplomatic relations with Finland, the *Völkischer Beobachter* supported Molotov's attacks on the "Western imperialists" and commented favorably on the fact that "the Soviet Union had decided, under all circumstances, to protect its just interests." It discounted all rumors to the effect that Russia was aiming to violate Finland's independence.

In strict adherence to this line, the Germans did not utter a word of complaint against the formation of Kuusinen's People's Government with its far-reaching program of social and economic changes. The entire Kuusinen affair was reported in the German press without comment.

One of the arguments employed in Berlin in Russia's favor was that the Kremlin had to forestall a postwar situation which might arise should Germany, for instance, be defeated. As the *Börsen Zeitung* put it, England's aim was

to fool everyone; a German defeat would give Britain "free access to the Baltic and would thus enable the capitalist powers to attack the Soviets in order to rid the world of this nuisance." In justification of the Russo-German Pact of 1939, Berlin pointed out that had Russia concluded a pact with Britain and France the Republic of Finland would have been one of the victims to be sacrificed by the Anglo-French bloc.

Similar backing was given by the Wilhelmstrasse to the Kremlin in the days preceding the League of Nations session of December 1-15. Berlin used every means to prevent the smaller nations from participating in it. There was an ominous undertone in a statement of the *Montag* of December 10 that "every state which has sent delegates to participate in this conference should realize that it is a party to Anglo-French maneuvers against Germany and Russia." The German press went out of its way to underline Russo-German collaboration, for during this period a rather unpleasant incident occurred between the two countries.

One year prior to the outbreak of the Russo-Finnish conflict, Helsinki had placed a large order in Czechoslovakia for military equipment and ammunition. After Germany signed the Pact of August 23 with Russia, Finland had demanded delivery of her order by the Czechoslovak plants now in Germany's possession. Berlin agreed and, at the very moment when Russo-Finnish relations were nearing the break, Finland was receiving considerable amounts of rifles and machine guns from Czechoslovak plants.<sup>8</sup> This was no secret to the Kremlin and it caused the first public rift between Moscow and Berlin.

The form in which this rift was aired was one subsequently followed by the Soviet Government whenever it wanted to indicate its displeasure with some German action. Without casting any direct reflections upon Germany, Tass released a cable from its Stockholm correspondent quoting Swedish newspapers of December 9:

The London correspondents of *Svenska Dagbladet* and *Dagens Nyheter* report that, according to informed British circles, Germany has lately been sending guns and a large consignment of rifles to Finland. All this was shipped to Finland through



Scandinavian ports, whence it was transported by railroad. At the moment Germany is offering Finland more equipment at reduced prices. According to *Dagens Nyheter* Germany is also permitting transit over her territory of Italian ammunition destined for Finland. About fifty or sixty Savoia bombers which are now on their way to Finland, it said, not only flew over German territory but also made a landing in Germany, where they were refueled with German oil.

This release by Tass was sensational enough by itself. The sensation was multiplied when, following the Tass story from Stockholm, *Izvestiya* of December 10 published a London telegram favorable to England, stating that "the British Government does not confirm Stockholm's reports that Finland ordered a hundred pursuit planes in Great Britain."

Berlin at once issued a denial of the Tass report. On the day of the *Izvestiya* story Berlin officially stated that "since the outbreak of Russo-Finnish hostilities all direct or indirect shipments of military equipment to Finland by Germany have ceased." Berlin also denied the story about Italian bombers having used German facilities on their way to Finland.

Had Molotov inquired of the German Ambassador in Moscow, Count von der Schulenburg, he would have received verbally the same denial which was later issued in Berlin, and the incident would not have been aired in the press. The mere fact that Tass had publicized the incident while at the same time playing up Britain's policy against Germany's had the tone of a note of warning directed to Berlin.

The Wilhelmstrasse now adopted a more rigid policy. Several days after the incident the *Völkischer Beobachter* once more emphasized that the "British Ministry of Propaganda is spreading false rumors concerning Germany's delivery of military equipment to Finland. This is a vile and tendentious lie."<sup>9</sup> And when the Finns reproached Berlin for preventing the Italian bombers from reaching Finland, the German Foreign Office refused all explanation. The bombers were eventually turned back to Italy. Thus Germany once again demonstrated her loyalty to Moscow. At the

same time she set up a stricter watch over her satellites.

The Hungarian Government, for instance, with which the Soviet severed diplomatic relations in February, 1939, after Hungary's adhesion to the Anti-Comintern Pact, deemed it necessary to make the following declaration to the Narkomindel on January 14, 1940:

Ill-purposed rumors have been spread lately concerning the recent negotiations in Venice between the Hungarian and Italian Foreign Ministers, Csaki and Ciano. It has been asserted that these Italo-Hungarian negotiations were pointed against the U. S. S. R. The Hungarian Government considers it necessary to deny these assertions in the most categorical form. It considers it proper to add that the formation of no blocs of states was discussed in Venice.

On February 22 Budapest issued an official denial of reports that Hungary was sending volunteers to Finland.\*

By the end of December Sweden and Norway had become the center of a bitter diplomatic struggle between Germany and the Anglo-French bloc. The Western Powers could extend aid to Finland only through Sweden and Norway and with the acquiescence of these countries. But even the transit of Anglo-French forces through their territory would have been interpreted as meaning that these countries had gone over to Russia's enemies. Germany in turn was exerting her full influence to prevent this transit of Allied troops, not so much from loyalty to Russia as out of fear for her own position.

The possibility that the Russo-Finnish conflict might spread to Scandinavia worried Berlin. The presence of Allied troops on Scandinavian territory would be a direct threat, and the German Government was ready to block

\* The Soviet Government in turn, at Berlin's request, forced the Czechoslovak Minister, Zdenek Fierlinger, to relinquish his post on December 24, 1939. M. Fierlinger had spent four years in Moscow and had been largely instrumental in negotiating the Russo-Czech Pact. Moscow continued to recognize him as Czechoslovak Minister after Bohemia was invaded by Germany and even after the signing of the Russo-German Pact.

H. B. Elliston also relates, in *Finland Fights*, that there was a widespread belief in Finland that Germany had given Russia the plans of the Mannerheim Line. There were persistent rumors that a German general by the name of Arnike, who had had a hand in the construction of the line, had been forced to give the plans to the Russian General Staff. He eventually committed suicide at the suggestion, so it was said, of his fellow officers.

the movement of British and French troops through Scandinavia by all available means, including invasion. Sweden and Norway were in danger of becoming a new theater of war.

On this score the German press left no room for doubt. As early as January 3 Berlin warned Denmark, Sweden, and Norway that it would regard unfavorably the transportation of Anglo-French troops over Scandinavian territory. The German newspapers printed maps purporting to show the routes which the Allies would take in their attack upon Russia simultaneously from Scandinavia and Syria. Sweden especially was menaced with the fate of Poland. On January 6 the *Lokal Anzeiger* wrote: "Sweden is preparing to sacrifice her hide for Britain; again a comparison with Poland seems inevitable."

The Swedish press protested vigorously against the German threats, but this did not change things. Moscow approved the German press campaign against Sweden. "Berlin realizes," wrote *Krasnaya Zvezda* (Red Star), organ of the Red Army, on January 6, "that the Finnish question is an essential part of the Anglo-French strategic plan against Germany. The hope of making the Scandinavian countries into obedient instruments of Anglo-French policy lies at the basis of Anglo-French aid to the Finland of Mannerheim."

What Germany sought was a speedy end to the Russo-Finnish War—on any terms, and she was working in that direction. Just when and how Berlin began to work for a Russo-Finnish rapprochement was of course a deep secret, and the Wilhelmstrasse steadfastly denied all reports to this effect which appeared in the foreign press. But the German press, reflecting governmental sentiment, had broached the subject of German mediation as early as the middle of January. Now is the moment, wrote the *Kölnische Zeitung* of January 12—a moment which may never come again—for "Germany to settle the Soviet-Finnish conflict. Otherwise the General Staffs of the large powers will include Finland in their plans." The role of mediator was all the easier for Germany because she had never recognized, or even contemplated recognizing, the Kuusinen government

and had maintained normal diplomatic relations with Helsinki.

In general Germany made much of her neutrality in the Russo-Finnish conflict. When the *Nachtausgabe* published the sensational article about Russia's right to an outlet on the Atlantic through Norway, the Auswärtiges Amt informed the Berlin correspondents on January 17 that Germany did not support the view that the U. S. S. R. had an interest in the North Atlantic. The Soviet Foreign Commissariat also condemned this article as baseless. When rumors appeared in the foreign press of German officers in charge of Soviet air squadrons, Berlin immediately denied them, Germany had sent no officers to Russia since the Soviet Government had not asked for any and also because Berlin was completely neutral in the Russo-Finnish War. Nevertheless, friendship with Russia remained the cornerstone of German foreign policy. In his speech commemorating the seventh anniversary of his seizure of power, Hitler put the German position succinctly:

For many centuries Germany and Russia lived in peace and friendship. Why should it not be possible to continue such a policy in the future? I think that it is possible, and this is what both peoples desire. All attempts on the part of the British and French plutocrats to provoke a conflict between us are doomed to fail.

### 9. *The Position of Sweden and Norway*

The primary aim of the Scandinavian states, like that of many other neutrals, was to avoid being involved in the war. Despite their strong bonds of friendship with Finland, their basic foreign policy was primarily one of self-preservation. The Swedish Foreign Minister, Sandler, who had declared that "neutrality is idiocy" and who favored direct military aid to Finland and a military alliance with Britain and France, was forced to resign. In a speech of January 11 King Gustav V promised the Finns "all humanitarian and possible material aid, conditioned, of course, by our own situation." On January 17 the Prime Minister of Sweden, Per Albin Hansson, reiterated this stand:

Our kingdom will rebuff all attempts upon its neutrality or its territory. We have no intention of permitting passage of foreign troops through our country or of giving foreigners any bases on our territory.

The government favors aid to Finland but it must be vigilant lest Sweden become an arena of military conflict.

This statement was the result of a number of diplomatic démarches by Germany and Soviet Russia. On January 5 Alexandra Kollontai, Soviet Minister in Stockholm, had handed the Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Gunther, a protest against actions and statements inimical to Russia on the part "of some anti-Soviet circles" and newspapers, particularly the *Social-Democrat*, which had even demanded a declaration of war against the U. S. S. R. The Soviet note complained that the Government of Sweden was doing nothing to stop this anti-Soviet campaign and that "official persons" were participating in the movement to aid the "Ryti-Tanner government." Up to December 7, the note further stated, 47 recruiting stations had been opened in Sweden, and on December 28 10,000 Swedish volunteers had arrived in Finland. Moreover, two further corps of volunteers were on their way to Finland under the leadership of General Ernst Linder. Sweden was also accused of sending arms to the Finns and of permitting the transit of military equipment through its territory.

In conclusion the Soviet note stated:

The Government of the U. S. S. R. deems it opportune at this moment to call to the attention of the Swedish Government the fact that such actions on the part of Swedish authorities are not only contrary to Sweden's policy of neutrality but may lead to unfortunate complications in the relations between Sweden and the Soviet Union.

On January 10 the Swedish Government handed its reply to the Soviet Envoy. The Swedish note pointed out that the people of Sweden had profound and genuine feelings of sympathy for Finland, but that neither the stand of the government nor that of the Swedish press could in any way be interpreted to mean that Sweden was acting contrary to its policy of neutrality. It denied the Soviets' complaint regarding the recruiting of volunteers and pointed

out that all recruiting was on private initiative. Furthermore, the number of volunteers mentioned in the Soviet protest did not correspond to the fact.\* As to the shipment of arms from Sweden or through Swedish territory, this did not constitute a violation of neutrality.

Simultaneously with the Soviet protest to Sweden, the Russian Minister in Norway, Plotnikov, transmitted to the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Koht, a note couched in identical language, protesting against an anti-Soviet campaign "which is being carried on by circles close to the government and also by the Norwegian press." It repeated the complaints against military aid to the "Ryti-Tanner government," against recruiting, and against the transit of military equipment across Norwegian territory. It also ended with a threat of "unfortunate complications." The reply of the Norwegian Government on the following day rejected all accusations that it was acting in violation of the spirit of neutrality.

The Soviet Commissariat of Foreign Affairs published an abridged version of this diplomatic correspondence, ending on a threatening note: "The replies of the Governments of Norway and particularly of Sweden to the Soviet representations cannot be considered as completely satisfactory . . . The Governments of Sweden and Norway do not show enough resistance to the actions of the states that seek to involve them in a war against the U. S. S. R."

The tenseness of the situation was heightened when Soviet airplanes flew over Swedish and Norwegian territory several times and when they bombed the Swedish island of Kalas in the middle of January. On January 15 and 16 both Sweden and Norway protested to Moscow. The Commissariat of Foreign Affairs acknowledged that bombs had been dropped on Swedish territory and expressed its regrets, attributing the incident to an error due to atmospheric conditions.

The most important question, however, was the transit of Anglo-French troops through the Scandinavian countries. The northern states were in a constant state of agita-

\* Subsequent information revealed that in all Sweden had sent 8,500 volunteers to Finland

tion over this problem, since they were on the one hand pressed by England, France, and Finland and on the other threatened with drastic measures by Russia and particularly by Germany.

During the second half of January, 1940, when England and France had decided to take decisive military action in aid of Finland, the pressure on the Scandinavian countries increased. The real objective of the Allies was, of course, to open up a second front against Germany. The hope of creating this front in Scandinavia was linked up with the Allies' support of Finland against Soviet Russia.

### 10. *England and France*

Indignation against the Soviet attack upon Finland was strongest in England and France. The main reason for this, aside from the purely moral element and sympathy for a small nation, was the growing irritation in London and Paris at the close collaboration between Russia and Germany. Never were Soviet relations with the Anglo-French bloc so strained as they were between December, 1939, and March, 1940. This was perhaps best expressed by Premier Daladier in his speech in the Chamber on December 8:

The whole world is shocked, horrified, and amazed at this attack upon Finland. I am certain that even in enemy states there are people who are disgusted with this crime against a noble country . . . The world's conscience, which has too long remained silent in the face of such acts of brute force, is now awakening.

In Britain even the *Daily Herald*, the hitherto pro-Soviet organ of the Labor party, wrote on December 7: "The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is dead. Stalin's new imperialist Russia takes its place . . . Now finally Stalin's Russia sacrifices all claims to the respect of the working-class movement."

With mounting indignation the press in France and England began to refer more and more to "Soviet bandits" and "Stalinist imperialists."

In the French Senate voices were raised in favor of a diplomatic rupture with Russia. The leader of the French Socialists, Léon Blum, condemned the Scandinavian countries as well as the Anglo-French bloc for not having promised military aid to Finland before it was attacked. The idea of a war for Finland was beginning to make headway in France and to a certain extent in England.

Léon Blum wrote in the *Populaire* of December 24: "Had the Scandinavian countries made known in time their readiness to aid Finland, and had the Anglo-French bloc declared that in case of attack they would come to the defense of Finland, Stalin would never have dared to invade that country."

In general both London and Paris exaggerated the possibilities of military aid to Finland. They relied overmuch on Scandinavian collaboration "Norway and particularly Sweden," wrote Jacques Delebecque in the *Revue Universelle* of December, 1939 (p. 670), "can say their word in this matter, and have apparently decided to say it should it become necessary. There are good indications that Sweden, which possesses a military tradition and has a considerable fleet, will support Finland to the end."

The Allied press, particularly the French press, was now urging more determined measures against Soviet Russia. One newspaper insisted that the Soviet Embassy in Paris was a "center of pro-German espionage." "Ah, if only the Finns could attack Leningrad," exclaimed Vladimir d'Ormesson in the *Figaro* of January 3, 1940 "The Allies must embark upon military operations in Finland." On the same day a writer in the *Jour* suggested that Allied military operations against Russia should commence in the Caucasus since a blow at the oil wells would also be a blow at the Germans and at the Soviet collective farms. The more official *Temps* stated: "The Finnish campaign has exposed the disintegration of the Soviet Government. The High Command has no plan of operations. Defeat in Finland, even if the Finns should fall in the process, would be a blow from which Bolshevism would never recover. The military might of the Soviets has turned out to be a huge bluff."



The conclusion of the *Temps* was that the Allies should now come openly to the aid of Finland.

And in London Churchill was saying:

The Finns have exposed for all the world to see the military incapacity of the Red Army and of the Red Air Force. Many illusions about Soviet Russia have been dispelled in these fierce weeks of fighting in the Arctic circle. Everyone can see how Communism rots the soul of a nation, how it makes it abject and hungry in peace, and proves it base, abominable in war.<sup>10</sup>

In a speech before the House of Commons Neville Chamberlain stated that "our reply to the resolution of the League of Nations will not remain a pure formality." In the meantime the *Temps* of January 9 was already developing a concrete plan of action. The Allied forces were to occupy Murmansk and then make a landing at Petsamo. At the same time the fleet was to be sent to the Black Sea to prepare operations against Baku and against Odessa, the latter in coöperation with Rumania.

Insistent demands for breaking off diplomatic relations with Russia were heard in Paris, London, and Washington. In England, however, the British Labor party was still opposed to such a course and Chamberlain had to proceed with caution. "The decision of whether or not to break relations with the Soviet Union," he stated, "is one that would require most careful consideration in all its aspects."

In France, on the other hand, the Socialist party was for a break and Léon Blum's newspaper, *Populaire*, openly pursued its debate with the British Labor party.<sup>11</sup> In Washington, too, a considerable number of congressmen of both parties favored the severance of diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia.

Since the French Government always acted in close contact with London, voices demanding a break were ignored; but without breaking off diplomatic relations with Russia French authorities turned their attention to the Soviet trading organization in Paris which, they said, might serve as a transmission belt between Moscow and the French Communist party. On February 8 the French police raided the offices of the Soviet trading organization

and the homes of its employees. Safes were blown open and many documents confiscated. Intourist, official Soviet travel agency, was also subjected to search. The Soviet Ambassador in Paris, Jacob Suritz, demanded that the raids be stopped at once. The French authorities ignored him. He then lodged a formal protest, and a few days later he left for Moscow.

An interesting side light, typical of the international situation during that period, was the indignation of the official *Deutsches Nachrichten Büro*, which accused the French Government of violating the principles of diplomatic immunity and extraterritoriality. But as Havas pointed out, it was the Germans themselves who had first begun raids upon the Soviet trading organization in Berlin. Moreover, Havas commented, according to Soviet-French agreements only three high officials of the trading organization had had the privilege of diplomatic immunity, which they had lost when these agreements expired on December 31, 1939.

In the meantime the British and French General Staffs were completing military plans for an expedition against Soviet Russia through Scandinavia and the Near East. An expedition across Scandinavia was of the utmost importance to the Allies since it would also be aimed at the Swedish mines, which were supplying Germany with iron ore. In terms of military strategy, this would have stopped a serious gap in the tight naval blockade against Germany.

Moscow's relations with London and Paris were rapidly deteriorating, and a break seemed imminent. Some articles in the Anglo-French press aroused the Kremlin to white heat. On January 20 *Pravda* published a strongly worded editorial directed against England and France. It accused Downing Street of aiming to spread the war to the Scandinavian countries and to cut off Germany from ore supplies, and of "setting the torch of war" in the Balkans and the Near East. While deriding France for its persecution and torture of Communists, this editorial lauded the Berlin *National Zeitung* for its positive appraisal of Soviet architecture. The following day, at a great Lenin Memorial meeting in the Moscow Opera, which was

attended by Stalin and the entire Soviet Government, Alexander Shcherbakov delivered a speech in which he threatened England and France with the fate of "the interventionists of 1918." According to the United Press, the Soviet fleet was at that time "on maneuver" in the Black Sea, especially near Odessa and Turkey; Baku was practicing blackouts, and reinforcements were on their way to Georgia.

### II. *Allied Military Plans against Russia*

The Anglo-French plans called for a simultaneous attack from two directions: a landing in Scandinavia, where the Allied forces would make contact with the Finns, and an attack upon the Caucasus. Preparations for this campaign began in mid-January. While the British and French Envoys in Stockholm and Oslo, with the aid of the Finnish Government, were dickering for permission to transport troops across Sweden and Norway, the French Premier, Édouard Daladier, in a note of January 16, requested Gen. Maurice Gustave Gamelin and Admiral Jean Darlan to "prepare a memorandum on possible intervention to destroy the Russian oil fields."\* A meeting of the Supreme Allied Council was scheduled for February 5 to discuss the Finnish question. This was preceded, on January 31 and February 1, by a joint conference of Anglo-French military experts, at which plans for a campaign against Russia were carefully examined and analyzed.

War between the Allies and Soviet Russia, either in Finland or through the Caucasus seemed inevitable. Old Russian stocks, which had been worthless for more than two decades, suddenly began to rise on the Paris Bourse. This was particularly true of stocks in the Baku oil fields. They first began to climb on August 16, 1939, two weeks before Hitler's attack upon Poland, reaching 80 by

\* *German White Book, No. 6* According to German sources, the documents in this book were in the secret code of the French General Staff. They were seized in the small town of La Charité, on the Loire, by the Intelligence Division of the German Army. The authenticity of some of these documents was later questioned. A discussion about them, however, in July 1940, in the House of Commons, brought out that they were in principle correct.

December and 200 at the end of February, 1940. The impending war with Russia seemed so much of a certainty that in the month of February a group of former owners of the Caucasus oil fields organized in Paris an association to protect their interests once Russia was defeated and private property restored in the country.<sup>12</sup>

At the conference of the Supreme Allied Council on February 5, in which Chamberlain, Daladier, and representatives of the British and French High Commands took part, a number of important decisions were made with regard to Russia and Finland. There is hardly any doubt but that, had the Russo-Finnish conflict lasted another month, the Soviets would have become involved in an open military conflict with the Western Powers.

The first military plan considered at this conference of the Supreme Council was an attack on Russia through Scandinavia. Daladier informed it that France was ready to fit out an expeditionary force of 50,000 men in the shortest possible time. Britain was ready to furnish an equal number of troops. A combined Anglo-French expeditionary force of about 100,000 to 150,000 men was to have been ready in a few weeks.

At the beginning of March an expeditionary force of 100,000 men was ready to leave for Scandinavia. It was estimated that it would take from the beginning of March to the end of April to transport this force, part of which was to set out at once for the Finnish front, while a part would remain in Sweden to await reinforcements. The transportation of these Allied troops to Scandinavia was to have been done "unofficially."<sup>13</sup> "According to secret information which I received from General Ironside," wrote the French Commander in Chief, Gustave Gamelin, "I estimate that a large force of about 150,000 men will be ready to leave for Scandinavia."

Gamelin's notes also mention the possibility of an attack on the Caucasus. The chief attacking force in this case would have been General Weygand's army, based in Syria. Marshal Gamelin also anticipated that the war might spread to the Balkans and that it would thus be possible to create a large Balkan force against the Germans.

As a matter of fact, he considered an attack through Scandinavia less essential to the success of the Anglo-French military operations than an attack in the East. He made the following handwritten note on the margin of the detailed report on the plans of operation: "From a military point of view, a war in the Balkans and the Caucasus is more advantageous to us."

According to the documents published in the *German White Book*, General Weygand telegraphed the French Commander in Chief on March 7 that, in view of reports from London about the possible bombardment of Baku and Batum, he would at once send out a reconnaissance group to investigate Turkish airfields situated near the Soviet border in the vicinity of Diarbekir, Erzurum, Kars, and El Jezireh. "Reconnaissance of these objectives will be carried out in the shortest possible time by British and French officers who will arrive dressed in civilian clothes. We shall create the impression that the aim of this group is to investigate the oil fields in these regions."

Gamelin, on his part, informed Weygand that the operations in the Near East would be directed by the British,\* while the command in the Caucasus would be taken over by the Turks, since the bulk of the land forces in that area were to be composed of Turkish forces.

Weygand's telegram is of exceptional interest, not only because it indicates the extent to which the Allies were ready with concrete plans but also because of the light it sheds upon Turkey's readiness to collaborate with the Western Powers against Russia. During that period a military alliance between the Anglo-French bloc and Turkey was actually a fact. World opinion was not aware of the extent to which Turkey was ready to fight her traditional Soviet ally. Equally interesting is the report of René Massigli, French Envoy in Ankara, of his visit to Saracoglu, Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs:

\* Maj Clement Attlee, leader of the British Labor Opposition in the House of Commons, asked the Prime Minister during a session of the House of Commons on March 11, 1940, in connection with the Finnish affair "May I take it that there is no intention of making an attack on Russia?" Chamberlain replied, "We have not arrived at that yet."

During my visit yesterday with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the latter on his own initiative showed me a telegram he had received during the night from the Turkish representative in Moscow, reporting a conversation which he had had with the Ambassador of the United States. According to the American Ambassador, the Russians are worried about a possible bombardment of the oil region of Baku. Soviet organizations inquired of American engineers how fires caused in that region by bombardment could be extinguished. The Americans had replied that, in view of the methods of oil production followed by the Russians, the soil was so saturated with oil that any fire was bound to spread to the adjoining regions. They stated that it would take months to extinguish the fires and perhaps years before the fields could be exploited again. As to the defense of the population, they said, it would be necessary to move the city about 50 kilometers from the border.

"I told the Minister," reporter Massigli, "that the airplanes will have to cross Turkish and Iranian territory. 'Do you anticipate objections on the part of Iran?' asked the Foreign Minister. This is as far as he went in making it clear that there would be no difficulties on the part of Turkey. His statement is quite characteristic, and I deem it my duty to bring it to your attention."\*

In the meantime there was a turn for the worse in Russo-Turkish relations. On February 21 Moscow recalled its engineers and technicians, who had spent many years in Turkey. The Turkish press wrote a great deal about an impending war between Russia and the Allies, which was due to break out in the spring. On February 15 *Izvestiya* published a sharply worded article against Turkey, which was "now completely in the orbit of Anglo-French influence." The article also stated that the Turkish Government had "sold out" to the Anglo-French bloc; that Turkey was constructing a special railway to Erzurum; and that she was endeavoring to "concoct" a bloc against Germany, to include Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

At the very moment when relations between Moscow and the Ankara-London-Paris bloc were reaching a

\* A denial published at Ankara on July 5, 1940, was not a denial at all. The Turkish Government promised to publish the "true text" but so far as I know this was never done.

breaking point, the Russo-Finnish peace had already been signed. This did not mean, of course, that the Allied military plans for an expedition to the North and for an attack on Russia from the Near East would necessarily be abandoned, as they had been drawn up independently of the outcome of the Russo-Finnish War and were designed primarily to strike a blow at Germany. Great Britain continued her preparations for an expedition to Norway.

The "Gamelin plan," as revealed by the *German White Book*, stressed the following points:

. . . To prevent Russia from exporting Caucasus oil to Germany would require direct military action against the U. S. S. R. Here the problem of Turkish collaboration arises, or at least of Turkish consent to military operations against Russia. In planning military operations in the Near East, the position of Italy is also of paramount importance. Whatever the circumstances, however, bombardment of the oil fields of Baku and of Batum would considerably curtail Germany's supply of fuel.

According to this source the "Gamelin plan" also provided for use of nine air units; France was to supply four units, and the other five were to be made up from the British air fleet. These units were to be based at El Jezireh, which had suitable ground facilities. Air bases were also to be set up in Asiatic Turkey. The French air command, the plans indicated, could order an immediate air attack upon the Caucasus, using two units of heavy bombers supported by two units of escort planes. These (if the situation on the French front should permit) could be detached from the French Air Force. These air attacks were to be supported by:

1. Naval action for the purpose of interrupting shipping in the Black Sea. To accomplish this objective, it would be necessary to employ French and British submarines, which would pass through the Straits with the overt or secret consent of Turkey. These submarines are also to make use of the Black Sea bases for Asia Minor.

2. Land operations, which can be carried out only by Turkey with the support of some of our forces now stationed in the Levant. At the insistence of England, Iran too might participate in these operations.

3. Taking into consideration all objections made to these plans within the last few months of the war, it is necessary to begin at once to lay mines in German rivers and to begin intensive air attacks in order to disrupt German river transportation. In either case the Russo-Finnish peace should not change the military plans of the Western Powers that were worked out for 1940. This peace should prompt us to work faster and with greater determination.<sup>14</sup>

Three weeks later these plans were made more concrete: "From ninety to a hundred Allied planes are to take part in the attack. It is to be expected that during the first six days from 30 to 35 per cent of the Caucasus oil refineries and port facilities would be destroyed "

At a somewhat later date, on April 17, General Weygand informed Marshal Gamelin that an air attack upon the Caucasus was being planned for late June or early July. "It would take from forty to fifty days to get ready for the attack. The entire operation will take only a few days and will represent a mass bombardment of those points, the destruction of which would be most effective for the achievement of our objectives."

The beginning of operations, then, was set for late June or early July, but by that time France was already a defeated country and Britain had more pressing problems. After these plans had been published widely in the German press, the Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office, Butler, explained to the House of Commons on July 11 that these "projects" were merely of a "hypothetical nature," but he did not deny their existence.

Here should be noted, however, that at bottom these plans were not so much anti-Soviet as anti-German. They affected the Soviets, since the latter were supplying Germany with oil, foodstuffs, and war material.

At this time, when the Russo-Finnish War was already over and the plans for an Allied attack in the Near East were still in full swing, an extraordinary diplomatic incident occurred, which resulted in the departure of the Soviet Envoy, Jacob Suritz, from France. On March 18 Suritz sent through the Paris telegraph office a telegram to Moscow which read:



Thanks to the wisdom of our Soviet Government and the great heroism of our Red Army, the plans of the *Anglo-French warmongers* to spread the flames of the European conflict in North-eastern Europe have collapsed . . . The Soviet Union remains an impregnable fortress which will wreck all the *sinister plans of the enemies of socialism and of the toilers of the world*.

This was a resolution of the Soviet colony—employees of the Embassy and trade organizations—in Paris.<sup>15</sup> That was why it was not sent in code. Moreover, it was not sent in Russian but in French. The French telegraph office refused to transmit it to Moscow. On the following day the French Chargé d'Affaires in Moscow informed Molotov that the offensive tone of the telegram, particularly of the passages underscored above, made Suritz *persona non grata* and that the French Government was demanding his recall. Although the Soviet Government stated that "it saw no basis for such action," it agreed to recall Suritz. For a long period the post of Soviet Ambassador to France was left unfilled.

## 12. *Italy and the Balkans*

While Germany to all intent and purposes was strictly neutral in the Russo-Finnish conflict, Italy from the very first day of the war adopted a hostile attitude toward Russia. In the first stages of the war she supplied Finland with war material, and the Italian press and public opinion supported Finland and the Western Powers' attempts to aid her.

In taking this position Italy was not prompted by humanitarian feelings toward little Finland. A far greater consideration influencing her stand at this period was the Balkan question which from the very outbreak of the European war determined Mussolini's relationship with Soviet Russia. Italy regarded herself as the power with the decisive voice in Balkan affairs; she was determined to prevent Russia from securing a foothold in the Balkans. Russian policy in Southeastern Europe, despite the Stalin-Hitler pact and Molotov's famous statement that "Fascism is a matter of taste," was colored by anti-Fascist tendencies.

After the visit of the Turkish Foreign Minister, Saracoglu, to Moscow in October, 1939—two months before the outbreak of Russo-Finnish hostilities—Moscow's plans regarding the Balkans were widely known, and to the outside world, at that period, they seemed even more far-reaching than they actually were. Rome was particularly disturbed by Moscow's attempt to create a Balkan bloc consisting of Turkey, Bulgaria, and Rumania; this bloc was the cause of some strong protests on the part of Italy.

At that time the *Communist International*, monthly organ of the Comintern, published an article by B. Stefanov entitled "The Imperialist War and Rumania." Although it purported to be an analysis of Anglo-French policies in the Balkans and of Soviet policies in Eastern Europe, Stefanov's article concluded quite unexpectedly with a demand that Rumania sign a mutual assistance treaty with the U. S. S. R. :

All these facts [the partition of Poland and the mutual assistance pacts between Russia and the Baltic States] and the pressure that is being brought to bear upon Rumania by the imperialist bourgeoisie of England and France to draw Rumania into the war, show conclusively that the interests of the people of Rumania, their interest in a peaceful and free development toward a better future, demand the immediate conclusion of a Soviet-Rumanian mutual assistance pact, similar to the agreements reached between the Soviet Union and the Baltic States.

This article appeared at the beginning of December. Simultaneously, on December 3, the *Stampa* of Turin reported that, according to information received by it, Hitler and Stalin had reached an agreement on Rumania by which the Soviet Union was to acquire all of Bessarabia, and Hungary was to obtain Transylvania, while the rest of Rumania would fall within the German sphere of interests. Both Stefanov's article and the *Stampa* report created an atmosphere of tension in the Balkans and in Italy. Stefanov's article was looked on as a trial balloon, as the first attempt on the part of Moscow to feel out Rumania and the Balkans. Moscow's intentions became a matter for serious discussions in Rumanian governing circles, and the Bucharest correspondent of the *New York Times* even re-

ported on December 6 that "Rumania will consider favorably concrete Soviet proposals." Moscow had hopes that the Finnish problem would be solved speedily and painlessly, and the solution of the Bessarabian question in the immediate future was on the Kremlin's agenda. Had there been no war with Finland the Soviets would have succeeded in realizing their territorial program between September 17, 1939, and the end of the year.

The excitement was all the greater since it spoke not merely of Bessarabia but of a Russo-Rumanian mutual assistance pact similar to those concluded with the Baltic States. This meant that Russia was aiming to acquire military bases in Rumania, in all probability on the Yugoslav and Bulgarian borders. Russia would thus have a firm footing in the heart of the Balkans, and would threaten Italian hegemony in Southern Europe.

On December 8 the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires in Bucharest, Pavel Kukoliev, visited the Rumanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Grigore Gafencu, and informed him that Russia had no aggressive designs against Rumania and would make no attempt to occupy Bessarabia. In an interview with the editor of an influential Bucharest newspaper Kukoliev stated: "We have no intentions of occupying Bessarabia; we wish to maintain the friendliest relations with Rumania."\*

This official statement by the Soviet representative did not allay the suspicions of Rumania, and the Balkans continued in a state of agitation. On January 1, 1940, George Tatarescu, the Rumanian Premier, in a speech delivered in the presence of King Carol, stated that "Rumania is prepared to fight to defend Bessarabia and Bukovina, which joined the Rumanian state of their own volition after the World War."†

\* The *New York Times*, December 9, 1939. The following official statement regarding Stefanov's article was published in *Pravda* and in the next number of the *Communist International*: "The editors of the magazine *Communist International* regard as a mistake the publication of Stefanov's article, which contained a number of altogether erroneous suppositions."

† *New York Times*, January 2, 1940. In this declaration Tatarescu mentioned Bukovina for the first time. Some details of Moscow's claims seem to have been known even then to the Rumanians.

Rome, in the meantime, was becoming more and more agitated about Russia's intentions. On December 5, demonstrations of protest by Italian students occurred in front of the Soviet Embassy. Volunteers for the Finnish Army were being recruited openly and demonstratively without interference from the Italian Government. Aviators, whom Finland needed especially, were also being recruited. The *Corriere della Sera* appealed to the Western Powers to send planes and pilots to Finland, while Italy dispatched shipments of arms to the Finns. The newly appointed Soviet Ambassador to Italy, Gorelkin, left Rome on December 13 without having succeeded, during his three weeks there, in presenting his credentials to the King, whom he was ready on this occasion to address as "Emperor of Ethiopia." The Italian Ambassador to Russia, Augusto Russo, returned to Rome on January 9. The Italian-Soviet trade agreement, which had lapsed on December 31, was not formally renewed. The Fascist Grand Council made public a resolution obviously aimed at the Soviet Union and its Balkan plans. "Anything that might occur in the Danubian Basin and in the Balkans will directly affect the vital interests of Italy."

In December and early January Italy sent four large consignments of arms to Finland. They were all transported across Germany. The first three passed through without interference. However, after the third shipment, of 140 carloads, had passed the German border, Moscow protested to Berlin, and the fourth consignment, of 45 carloads, was returned to Italy; thence it went to France and by sea to Finland. After this, Italy under German pressure drastically curtailed her aid to Finland.<sup>16</sup>

Relations between Moscow and Rome were rapidly deteriorating. The press and radio of both countries intensified their attacks. On January 12, 1940, the Kiev radio denounced the Italian Government in the following words: "Were it necessary to give a prize to a government which, more than any other, craves blood and rattles the saber; which, more than any other, should be held in contempt, a government which is ruthless and despicable, we would nominate the Government of Italy."<sup>17</sup>

The Moscow *Trud* wrote indignantly that Italy stood with one foot in the camp of the Allies and the other in the German camp. It accused the Italian press of publishing false accounts from the Finnish front. *Pravda* threatened Italy with the destruction of her northern provinces if she made common cause with the Allies.<sup>18</sup>

In this campaign of vilification Italy was not to be outdone. Rome spoke openly of its anti-Soviet policies. The *Corriere Padano* wrote on February 3: "Italy's policy in the Balkans has for its objective the blocking of Russia's drive to the Mediterranean. Italy combats Russia's influence in the Balkans."

While Germany never mentioned and had apparently forgotten the Anti-Comintern Pact, the Italian trade delegation which arrived in Bucharest at the end of February proposed that Rumania join it.<sup>19</sup> The invitation was declined since Rumania was still in the Anglo-French camp. At the same time it continued feverishly with the building of its new fortifications, the "Carol Line," along the boundary with Russia.

Events, however, took a different turn. Not until the summer of 1940 did the question of Bessarabia become acute, and the Balkans were embroiled in the war still later in the following winter.

### 13. *The United States and the Russo-Finnish War*

A negative attitude to Soviet foreign policy had been prevailing in the United States ever since the conclusion of the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact. It was considerably intensified after the American steamer *City of Flint* was seized by German warships and brought to the Soviet port of Murmansk in October, 1939; the ship was only freed after energetic protests of the American Government. But the animosity toward Soviet Russia reached its climax after the outbreak of the Soviet-Finnish War.

In a sharply worded statement of December 1, 1939, President Roosevelt expressed his government's attitude toward the Russo-Finnish conflict: "The news has come

as a profound shock to the Government of the United States . . . It is tragic to see the policy of force spreading and to realize that wanton disregard for law is still on the march."<sup>20</sup>

On February 10, in a speech to several thousand members of the American Youth Congress, the President took occasion to point out that 98 per cent of the American people sympathized with Finland.<sup>21</sup> In the first days of the Russo-Finnish conflict anti-Soviet sentiment was so strong in the United States that Moscow, fearing protest demonstrations, decided to remove the Soviet pavilion from the New York World's Fair.

The first step of the American Government was the "moral embargo," which subsequently was to play an important part in American-Russian relations. Put into force on December 2, 1939, it remained valid until January 21, 1941. "Plane manufacturers would bear in mind," the statement of December 2 said, "the American policy of condemning unprovoked bombing of civilians." At first the embargo covered airplanes, aeronautical equipment, materials essential to airplane manufacturing. On December 15 molybdenum and aluminum were added. On December 20 the State Department issued a statement prohibiting the delivery of plans, plants, etc., required for the production of high quality aviation gasoline.

American aid to Finland never attained large proportions. The American Navy agreed to sell the Finns 44 airplanes, and Helsinki also succeeded in procuring a limited quantity of arms in the United States.<sup>22</sup> Through public collections for Finnish War Relief, Americans also gave the Finns \$1,000,000 in cash. According to the Finnish Prime Minister, Cajander, this sum represented 90 per cent of all the funds which Finland received from private sources abroad. When it came, however, to asking direct aid from the United States Government, the Finns encountered great difficulties. The policy of official non-intervention which the State Department had pursued since the outbreak of the European war was interpreted in Washington in a strict and somewhat legalistic fashion.

Sympathy for the "little Finnish Republic" was universal and genuine, but the aid which it received from the United States was negligible.

As early as in September, 1939, Finland asked for a loan of \$60,000,000 in the United States, which, however, was not granted.<sup>23</sup> But shortly after the outbreak of the Russo-Finnish War the United States granted Finland a loan of \$10,000,000 for the purchase of "agricultural products and other civilian supplies." This was, of course, less than adequate, and in February, 1940, Washington was considering the advisability of extending another loan, this time of \$25,000,000. This proposal met with strong opposition in Congress, more particularly in the Senate. The stumbling block was the American Neutrality Act. As Senator George put it: "The very heart of the United States Neutrality Act is the restriction on credit to foreign governments . . ." Nevertheless on January 16, in a letter to Vice-President Garner and to Speaker Bankhead of the House of Representatives, President Roosevelt suggested concrete action in this matter.

There is without any doubt in the United States a great desire for some action to assist Finland to finance the purchase of agricultural surpluses and manufactured products, not including implements of war. There is at the same time undoubted opposition to the creation of precedents which might lead to large credits to nations in Europe, either belligerents or neutrals.<sup>24</sup>

Mr. Roosevelt suggested that credits be granted to Finland by the Export-Import Bank, a government corporation established by the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. The most reasonable approach in this case, he felt, would be through action by Congress to provide for an increase in the revolving credits on the Export-Import Bank and to authorize the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to purchase loans and securities from the Export-Import Bank so as to enable it to finance the additional exports required. This suggestion also met with strong opposition in Congress. It was only on February 13, after a long and acrimonious debate, that the Senate passed an act authorizing an advance of \$20,000,000 in fresh export

credits to the Republic of Finland, which was signed by the President on March 1, 1940. On March 12 the Russo-Finnish War came to an end.

A number of American volunteers went to Finland, and President Roosevelt indicated at a press conference on January 26 that they would not forfeit American citizenship unless they swore allegiance to a foreign power. However, Washington looked askance at the opening of recruiting stations in the United States. At the same time Kermit Roosevelt, a son of Theodore Roosevelt, was appointed in London as commander of an "international expeditionary force" to be sent to Finland's aid. In this case, too, preparations were long drawn out, and by the time this force was ready to leave for Finland the war had ended.

Throughout the Russo-Finnish War feeling against Soviet Russia ran high in the United States. As in France, voices were raised in favor of breaking off diplomatic relations. In a tense session of the House of Representatives on February 7, Representative John W. McCormack of Massachusetts proposed an amendment to the State Department Supply Bill, cutting out the annual salary of \$17,500 for the American Ambassador to Moscow. The amendment was defeated by three votes—108 to 105—but only after the administration had brought pressure to bear upon its supporters in Congress.

During a Senate debate on American-Russian diplomatic relations the State Department was asked whether the Soviet Government had fulfilled the terms of the "Litvinov Agreement" of 1933. To this Secretary Hull replied that, although Russia's failure to fulfill one or another part of her obligations should not necessarily result in a rupture of diplomatic relations, the Government of the United States had on several occasions called to the Kremlin's attention its failure to fulfill the obligations assumed by Litvinov during his visit to Washington. The results of these notes had been favorable in some instances, unfavorable in others. Mr. Hull also reminded the Senate of the protest which the United States had sent to the Soviet Government on August 25, 1935, in connection with the meeting



of the Communist International in Moscow. In its reply of August 27 the Soviet Government had refused to adopt Washington's view that, by permitting the Communist International to concern itself with American questions, Russia was interfering in the internal affairs of the United States. The United States had sent another note on August 31. With this the exchange of notes had ended without any positive result having been achieved.

At the same time the Secretary of State also informed Congress that numerous arrests of American citizens had taken place in Russia. In these instances, however, the *démarches* of the American Government had achieved positive results. At the moment only such Americans as were regarded by the Soviet Government as citizens of the U. S. S. R. were confined in Soviet jails. Finally, Hull mentioned the fact that no progress had been made toward settling American claims against Russia.

The strained relations between Washington and Moscow were further emphasized by the protests which the Soviet Ambassador, Constantine Oumansky, lodged with Secretary Hull on February 1. He complained, first of all, of a speech by Louis A. Johnson, Assistant Secretary of War, in New York on January 15. Johnson had stated that Russia's failures in Finland could be explained by the fact that "one free man is worth twenty slaves." Oumansky's second protest was directed against the "moral embargo" which Washington had placed upon the export of airplanes to Soviet Russia. Finally, he complained that Soviet workers, sent to the United States to learn American methods of production, were not permitted by the airplane manufacturers to enter their plants, in violation of their contracts with the U. S. S. R.

The tone of the Soviet press toward the United States was now shrill and irritated. *Krasnaya Zvezda*, organ of the Red Army, commented bitterly on the sending of American airplanes to Finland. On January 22 *Izvestiya*, in attacking Pope Pius XII, also took a jab at President Roosevelt, who had appointed Myron C. Taylor as his Envoy to the Vatican: "It is curious that Roosevelt has appointed the former president of a steel corporation, the

most worldly person, most interested in war orders [as an emissary to the Vatican]."

As for the Vatican, said *Izvestiya*, it was merely "an offshoot of European medievalism" which gave "signs of life as though the blood of those killed in war had infused it with vital forces."

Nevertheless, Ambassador Steinhardt played an important role in the behind-stage negotiations during the Russo-Finnish War, particularly in its last stages. The American diplomatic documents relating to this phase of Russo-American relations have not been published, but there is hardly any doubt that in the negotiations for the Russo-Finnish peace the United States took a part next to that of Sweden and Germany in importance.

#### 14. *The Beginning of Peace Negotiations*

Contact between Finland and Soviet Russia through third powers had been established long before peace was signed. Finland made repeated attempts during the war to enter into negotiations with Moscow. One such attempt was the public announcement by the Finnish Government of its readiness to accept mediation by the United States. This was followed by the summoning of the League of Nations and by Tanner's radio speech on December 15. Russia was deaf to all peace feelers, the Kremlin refusing to enter into negotiations with the "White Guard Mannerheim Gang." Having failed in these attempts to establish contact with Moscow, Helsinki, according to Ryti's account, began "to send out feelers through different channels."<sup>25</sup> Although Mr. Ryti never mentioned the "channels" by name, Sweden, and particularly Germany, worked energetically for the resumption of diplomatic contact between the U. S. S. R. and Finland.

Toward the end of January Moscow's attitude changed radically, and the Kremlin gave indications that it was ready to conclude peace with the existing Helsinki government. On January 29, before the Red Army's offensive in Karelia, the Soviet Government informed Sweden, which was to pass the information on to Finland, that it was not

"in principle opposed to concluding an agreement with the Ryti-Tanner government" and that "the Finnish Government should make an adequate proposal to enter negotiations based on the recent Soviet demands." The Finnish answer was an offer to enter upon negotiations based on the old Finnish proposals <sup>26</sup>

Stalin's decision to change his position and again recognize the "White Guard" Finnish Government was prompted not so much by direct consideration of military strategy as by the general political situation in Europe. It was not the Soviet defeats that had made Stalin more amenable, since he harbored no doubt but that a new Russian attack in the spring would result in Finland's defeat. But the war had lasted longer than expected and had placed in jeopardy Russia's entire foreign policy. The problems of the Balkans were awaiting a solution, and they could not possibly be solved so long as Russia was involved in war. What was even more important, Moscow was receiving concrete information from London and Paris to the effect that the Allies were seriously considering coming to the aid of the Finns. Moscow, which had a vast and well-organized intelligence apparatus in Paris, was only too well informed of the meeting of the Supreme Allied Council and of the military preparations that were going on in France and Britain for an attack upon Russia through Finland and the Caucasus. By January 20 there was open talk in Allied government and military circles of military aid to Finland. The German press, too, was writing more and more insistently of Allied plans to intervene in Finland. Moscow began to realize that what was to have been a local war, lasting at most a week, was in danger of becoming a general European war against Russia. A big war in which Russia would have to fight on the side of Germany was something which Stalin did not relish.

For reasons of her own, Germany too was urging the Kremlin to make peace with Finland. At that moment an Allied expedition to Scandinavia would have created serious difficulties for Germany, while a war in the Caucasus would have curtailed Germany's supply of oil.

As things stood, the Russo-Finnish War ran counter to Berlin's plans, since Russia was now able to supply only limited quantities of foodstuffs and other materials on which Germany had counted. A war in Petsamo and Baku, in the view of the German High Command, could have only dire results.

On more than one occasion Berlin denied rumors that it had a hand in the Russo-Finnish peace negotiations. After peace was concluded the cat was let out of the bag. "Now one can reveal," wrote the well-informed Amsterdam *Allgemeene Handelsblad* on March 13, "that Germany was in the center of all the moves which led up to the peace negotiations and to the signing of peace. During the preparatory campaign for peace Berlin was in regular contact with Moscow."

The German Ambassador in Moscow, Count von der Schulenburg, was particularly active, and visited Molotov frequently. The German Envoy in Finland, Wipert von Blücher, was constantly traveling between Berlin and Helsinki. Of even greater significance were the activities of the German Embassy in Sweden, for Stockholm was the center of the negotiations.

As Allied military preparations against Russia neared completion, Germany intensified her diplomatic activity. From the beginning of March until the conclusion of the Russo-Finnish peace on March 12, the diplomatic struggle waged behind scenes in Helsinki, Stockholm, and Moscow between the German diplomats and those of the Anglo-French bloc was indeed of historic proportions. However, Moscow was opposed to *open* German mediation.<sup>27</sup>

Such were the circumstances which lay at the bottom of Russia's abandonment of her original intransigence and which motivated her consent in principle to conclude peace with the Helsinki government. The main point of dispute was of course the terms of peace. As noted above, Molotov had reiterated the old Soviet demands on January 29. Helsinki, on the other hand, bolstered up by Soviet defeats and by anticipation of Allied aid, was adamant. Finland's decision to bargain to the last was echoed in President Kyösti Kallio's speech of February 1. "We are

forced to destroy people innocent of this war, people we have no reason to hate as a nation. For this reason we regard this barbarous attack as senseless and are ready to negotiate an *honorable peace*."

*Pravda* was not slow in answering with an indignant article which ignored both the Soviet proposals and Kallio's speech. "The Finnish bandits will be destroyed and exterminated . . . We will achieve victory over them under our great leader, Stalin, the man with the heart of a scholar, the faith of a workingman, and the bearing of a soldier."<sup>28</sup>

Publicly Moscow still stuck to its version that it was engaged in a "revolutionary war" with Finland. Behind the scenes negotiations were in full swing. On February 3 Ambassador Steinhardt had a long conversation with Molotov on Finland, the contents of which have not been made public. British and French diplomats were active, too. Now their aim was to keep Finland from making too many concessions to Russia. Paris and London were urging Helsinki to go on with the struggle. They offered to send to the Finnish front not only the 30,000 soldiers requested by Mannerheim in January but many more besides. They promised Finland that at the first opportunity a landing of Allied troops would take place simultaneously in Bergen, Trondheim, and Narvik.<sup>29</sup>

The Finnish Government, most of which was much closer in thought and feeling to Paris and London than to Moscow or Berlin, was ready to follow the lead of the Allies. Helsinki therefore let it be known in advance that it would not consent to make drastic concessions. On February 12 Mr. Tanner issued a statement, aimed at some of the peace mediators, in which he complained that "all sorts of rumors about mediation which are being mooted about are probably designed to discourage outside aid to Finland."

The main problem, as Helsinki saw it, was to reach an understanding with Sweden, and Tanner spent a great deal of time explaining Finland's position to the Swedish Prime Minister, Per Albin Hansson, to the Foreign Minister, Christian E. Gunther, and to the Minister of

War, Per Edwin Skoeld. It was Tanner's contention that for Finland there were three ways out of her dangerous situation: either Stockholm should at once dispatch two Swedish divisions to the Finnish front, or else the Scandinavian countries should permit the transit of Anglo-French troops across their territories. The third way out was complete capitulation to Moscow. The Swedish Ministers rejected the first two alternatives and urged Tanner to come to an understanding with Moscow.

Berlin now decided to abandon its attitude of passive neutrality and to come out into the open. Obviously referring to some diplomatic *démarches* already made, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, on February 16 published an article about Finland; as it was reproduced by the entire German press, this article had undoubtedly been prepared by the *Auswärtiges Amt*. It stated bluntly that Finland's fate was now sealed, since she preferred to rely on Anglo-French aid. "Every small nation," said the *Völkischer Beobachter*, obviously referring to Norway and Sweden, "which under these circumstances now comes to Finland's aid will suffer the fate of Poland." The threat could not have been more explicit. At the same time, the German Commander in Chief, Von Brauchitsch, held a grand review of his troops in Danzig; its purpose was also to intimidate the Scandinavian states.

These direct threats could not but make a strong impression on the Scandinavians. Two days later the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs released an official communiqué stating that under no circumstances would Sweden permit the transit of foreign troops across its territory.<sup>30</sup>

In a speech of the same day the Norwegian Foreign Minister, Koht, emphasized Norway's sympathy for Finland but added that, "lest our country become a theater of war, we shall continue to pursue a policy of neutrality." The following day the King of Sweden, in a speech to the Council of Ministers, declared: "From the first day of war I let Finland know that she should not count on Swedish military aid. Under the circumstances we shall remain firm in our decision."<sup>31</sup> On February 21 the Swedish Riksdag gave its overwhelming approval to the government's policy.<sup>32</sup>

On February 22 Downing Street received Russia's peace terms, from the Soviet Ambassador in London, Ivan Maisky. According to Molotov's later statement, this was done at the request of the British Government. The Russian terms made no mention of a Revolutionary Finnish Government.

Among others they contained the following demands:

1. The entire Karelian isthmus to be ceded to Russia;
2. All islands in the Gulf of Finland already occupied by Red troops to be ceded to Russia;
3. The eastern part of the Rybachi Peninsula to be ceded to Russia; and
4. The Hankö Peninsula to be leased to Russia for a long term of years.

Maisky requested that these terms be forwarded by Great Britain to the Finnish Government. Downing Street, however, after a five days' study of them, decided that they were "outrageous" and declined the role of mediator between Finland and the Soviets. At the same time the British and French Governments offered to send immediately an expeditionary corps to Finland. Helsinki, of course, was informed of Moscow's terms.

While these negotiations were going on in London and Stockholm, the Moscow press emphasized Russia's unchanged position toward Finland. On February 26 *Komsomolskaya Pravda* rejected any sort of deal with Helsinki and declared that the Soviet Union would strive for a complete victory for the Kuusinen government.

In the meantime peace negotiations were continuing in Stockholm, which had become a hotbed of diplomatic intrigue. Tanner was there, awaiting Stockholm's decision regarding the transit of Allied troops. So were Hitler's Press Chief, Otto Dietrich, and the German Minister to Sweden, who was in constant consultation with General Mannerheim's special envoy, a certain General Rosenboer. The upshot of all these moves and countermoves was that Stockholm decided to remain firm in its original decision not to permit the transit of Allied troops across Swedish territory. With this decision Tanner, accompanied by a special emissary of the King of Sweden,

finally had to return to Helsinki. In mortal fear of war, Sweden was striving to bring about peace between Finland and Russia, and in this supported Berlin wholeheartedly.

London and Paris were still hoping for a Finnish request for military aid. On February 25 the Allies informed Helsinki officially of their readiness to extend military aid to Finland at once should she desire it. The Allied expeditionary force was ready. It was merely awaiting Finland's call. Without a request from Finland the Allies did not want to, in fact *could not*, act "Further aid to Finland," wrote the Paris *Temps* on March 8, "depends entirely upon Helsinki's decision to request it." France also replaced its Minister in Helsinki with Vaux Saint-Cyr, who was regarded as more energetic and better informed than his predecessor. Saint-Cyr's instructions were to inform Helsinki that the Allies were ready to employ all their resources to aid Finland.<sup>33</sup>

Because of the stand taken by Norway and Sweden Helsinki was wary of applying to the Allies for help. Early in March Finland had decided upon the only way out of its precarious situation. "On March 3," according to Dr. S. Schwartz, who had left Paris at the end of February, 1940, on an unofficial mission to Helsinki, on behalf of the Russian Social-Democratic party, "the Finnish Government decided to express its readiness to enter into negotiations with Moscow."<sup>34</sup> On March 6, under circumstances of great secrecy, a special peace mission left Helsinki for Moscow. The delegation, consisting of Prime Minister Risto Ryti, Juho Kusti Paasikivi, Gen. Rudolf Walden, and Professor Vaino Voionmaa, arrived secretly in Moscow; according to French sources, they were provided with Swedish passports and traveled under false names. Ryti and Paasikivi wore false beards. They stayed in a house on Ostrovski Street, which no outsider was permitted to enter, and they were driven about in an automobile with drawn curtains.<sup>35</sup>

The delegation's departure for Moscow aroused apprehension in London and Paris, since peace on the Kremlin's terms could only be interpreted as a complete victory for German diplomacy. The following day Daladier sent a



note to Helsinki; its text has not been published, but its contents were revealed a few days later in a speech of Daladier to the French Chamber of Deputies.

For several days now we have been awaiting a call from Finland to come to her aid with all the means and resources at our disposal. We cannot understand why Finland is delaying this call. We realize only too well what strong pressure Sweden is exerting upon you to conclude peace. But do you not fear that Russia, fearful of Allied intervention, is playing a game with you in order to destroy you? Aviation units and an expeditionary force stand in readiness to depart for the Finnish front. If, however, Finland does not turn at once to the Allies for aid, they will be unable, after the war, to bear any responsibility for Finland's territorial status.<sup>36</sup>

To this note Tanner, who was awaiting the outcome of the Moscow negotiations, promised a reply by March 12. Britain and France were alarmed. They now turned greater pressure on Norway, and particularly on the Swedish Government. "Finland can still be saved," the official French radio declared on March 9, "since all she has to do is to turn for help to the Allies." All attempts by London and Paris to influence the Norwegian and Swedish Governments to permit the transit of Anglo-French troops were in vain.<sup>37</sup> In the meantime feverish diplomatic activity in favor of peace was being carried on in Stockholm by Alexandra Kollontai, the Soviet Envoy, the Finnish representative, Erkkö, Otto Dietrich, and the Swedish Foreign Minister, Gunther. Stockholm was saying that the Soviet peace terms "were not so severe as had been assumed."<sup>38</sup> It was Sweden's lot to become the decisive voice in those days; Norway obediently followed her lead.

During this period voices were raised in Paris, for the first time, in favor of disregarding Sweden's neutrality. Léon Blum wrote in the *Populaire* of March 9 that England and France were ready to land an expeditionary force on Scandinavian soil despite the objections of Sweden and Norway. It is possible that, had all other conditions been favorable, the Allies would not have hesitated to disregard the principle of neutrality, the repeated violation of

which had long been an important trump in Nazi hands.\* But it was too late. Despite all their efforts, London and Paris were unable to block the negotiations in Moscow.

The meetings between the Finnish and Soviet peace delegates were formally correct but not cordial, although out of regard for the Finns Moscow had ceased all radio broadcasts in Finnish. All eight meetings were held in Molotov's office. Stalin did not attend any of them. Here and there, during the conferences, one side or the other would agree to slight changes in the original proposals, but such changes dealt only with minor points, such as the date for the evacuation of the territory to be ceded to Russia, or the liquidation of civilian property in those territories. Molotov had a surprise up his sleeve. The Finns were utterly unprepared for the Russian demand for the building of a new railway between Kandalaksha and Kemijaervi, connecting the Murmansk Railroad with the narrow "waist" of Finland. This had not been included in the preliminary peace terms as communicated by the Kremlin to Helsinki. The name of Otto Kuusinen was mentioned but once, and that only in passing, during the entire negotiations.<sup>39</sup>

On March 10 and 11 a serious crisis occurred in the negotiations.<sup>40</sup> A rupture seemed imminent. The Soviet Government ordered the immediate resumption of Finnish-language broadcasts over the Moscow radio. On March 10 Kuusinen once again became the "true" spokesman of the Finnish people. "Comrades," the Moscow radio broadcast in Finnish, "lay down your arms and join the Kuusinen People's Army."<sup>41</sup>

It was probably in connection with this crisis that Churchill made his unexpected flight to Paris on March 11

\* This was later denied by Chamberlain. On March 13 the Prime Minister was asked by a member of the House of Commons, Henderson, to confirm the fact that Britain did not contemplate violating Swedish and Norwegian neutrality. Chamberlain replied with a curt "of course not." Von Ribbentrop, however, was able later to point to a report of March 12 by the Finnish Envoy in Paris, which had come into his possession. According to this report, England and France had decided to land troops in Scandinavia and to present the Swedish and Norwegian Governments with a *fait accompli*. This was to be followed immediately by breaking off diplomatic relations with Moscow. (*German White Book*, No. 5, citing von Ribbentrop's speech of April 27, 1940)

His trip was to no avail, for the pressure on the Finns was so overpowering that the signing of a treaty on Soviet terms was a foregone conclusion.

On March 12 Finland made peace with the U. S. S. R. Hostilities ceased at noon on the 13th. Half an hour after the order to "cease fire" was given, the entire Finnish Army was sound asleep. Finnish soldiers slept where they stood. Some slept on cots, but most of them lay down on the damp ground. A minute before the Karelian isthmus had been shaken by the roar of hundreds of batteries. Now complete silence reigned. "At first no one believed that the war was over. When they finally realized that there would be no more fighting, every Finnish soldier was seized by one desire: to sleep, sleep, sleep."<sup>42</sup>

On the same day Tanner announced the peace over the radio. "The terms of peace," he stated, "are onerous for us. But the government is happy that the agreement does not limit Finland's sovereignty and independence, and that the program of Kuusinen's government has been abandoned."

In Helsinki flags were at half-mast. The newspapers appeared with black borders. Funeral marches were the only music played over the radio. An extraordinary session of the Finnish Diet approved the peace agreement by 142 votes to 3, with 52 abstentions. On March 16 President Kallio ratified the agreement and on the 18th Paasikivi left for Moscow to carry on further negotiations.

The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, at its meeting in Moscow, ratified the peace agreement on March 18. Molotov took this occasion to declare:

The Finnish People's [Kuusinen's] Government, in order to avert bloodshed and to alleviate the burdens of the Finnish people, agreed that every effort should be made to bring the war to an end at once. The question of dissolving the People's Government then arose. This it has already done of its own volition.

Molotov further complained of Finnish bestiality. He claimed that the Russians had found "corpses with their heads severed; some of these were set, feet uppermost,

against trees." This was a somewhat belated retort to the Finnish complaints that the Russians were using dum-dum bullets and poison gas. According to subsequent information, however, both Finnish and Russian charges appear to have been exaggerated.

Not only Finland but also England, France, and even Sweden interpreted the peace treaty as a defeat for their side. Mutual recriminations followed. Sweden blamed the Allies. Finland blamed Sweden. England and France were bitter against the neutral Scandinavians.

Berlin was triumphant. The fear that Russia would become involved in a long and exhausting war was now a thing of the past. The Allies had unquestionably suffered a great moral defeat, while Germany's star was shining more brightly than ever.

As for the losses suffered by each side in the war, reports, as was to be expected, were conflicting. Molotov claimed that the Russians had suffered 207,608 casualties altogether, 48,745 dead and 158,863 wounded. The Finnish losses, as officially announced by Helsinki, were 19,576 dead, 43,500 wounded, and 3,263 missing.\* When, in the latter part of May, an exchange of prisoners took place, there were 5,400 Russians in Finnish hands and only 820 Finns in Russia.<sup>43</sup>

### 15 *The Russo-Finnish Peace Treaty*

The war, which had lasted 104 days, ended with a peace treaty which hardly differed from the terms Moscow had offered Helsinki in October and November, 1939. It was signed in Moscow on March 12 by Molotov, Zhdanov, and Brigadier General Vassilevski on behalf of the U. S. S. R., and by Prime Minister Ryti, Paasikivi, General Walden, and Professor Voionmaa for Finland.

According to the terms of the treaty, the entire Karelian isthmus with the city of Viipuri, the whole of Viipuri Bay with its islands, as well as the territory west and north

\* The Military Staff of the Leningrad district termed the Finnish figures "ridiculous." According to the Russians the Finns had lost "not fewer than 85,000 dead and 250,000 wounded."

of Lake Ladoga with the cities of Keksholm and Sortavala, were ceded to Soviet Russia. Ladoga thus became a Soviet lake. In the region of Kandalaksha the border was also moved farther west, and parts of the Rybachi and Sredni peninsulas and a number of islands in the Gulf of Finland were handed over to the Soviet Union. The U. S. S. R., in turn, undertook to withdraw its military forces from the Petsamo area.

Finland also agreed to lease to the Soviet Union for 30 years, for an annual rent of 8,000,000 Finnish marks, the Hankö Peninsula and a belt of surrounding waters within a radius of 5 nautical miles to the south and east and of 3 nautical miles to the west and north, together with a number of islands located within these waters. Russia secured the right to establish on these islands a naval base capable of defending the access to the Gulf of Finland and to maintain there at her own expense "essential armed land and air forces."

Reaffirming the terms of the Treaty of 1920, Finland agreed to maintain no warships or armed vessels of more than 100 tons in the waters adjacent to its Arctic coast, and to restrict its warships or other armed ships there to 15 with a total tonnage not exceeding 400 tons. Helsinki also agreed not to maintain submarines and military aircraft in the waters of Petsamo.

The Soviet Union and its nationals received the right of free transit through the Petsamo area to and from Norway. Goods transported through the Petsamo area from Russia to Norway and vice versa were exempted from all inspection and control, as well as from custom duties or any other charges. Russia was also granted the right to maintain air traffic of unarmed aircraft between the Soviet Union and Norway across the Petsamo area. Finally, the Government of Finland gave the Russians the right of "goods transit between the Soviet Union and Sweden." For the development of this traffic by the shortest rail route, Moscow and Helsinki agreed that it was necessary to construct, "each in its own territory, and if possible in the course of the year 1940, a railway connecting Kandalaksha with Kemijaervi."

A special protocol signed on the same day established the procedure for the cessation of hostilities and for the withdrawal of troops behind the frontier as fixed by the treaty of peace.

About three weeks after the conclusion of peace, on March 31, the Supreme Soviet of the U. S. S. R. decided to transform small Karelia, which had hitherto been an autonomous republic within Russian S. F. S. R., into a full-fledge member of the Soviet Union (a "Union Republic"), as the "Karelo-Finnish Republic." The territories ceded by Finland to Soviet Russia were officially transferred to this Union Republic. On June 16 the newly created member of the Union held elections to its Supreme Soviet. According to *Pravda* of June 20, 1940, in all 497,043 inhabitants or 99.67 per cent of the population participated in the elections. As usual, the "bloc of Communists and nonparty Communists" received 98.53 per cent of all votes cast. On 7,299 ballots, however, the names of all the official candidates were scratched out.

### 16. *The Demise of Kuusinen's Government*

At the beginning of the Russo-Finnish War the Moscow and Leningrad press wrote at great length about the "revolutionary mass movement of the Finnish workers," who were allegedly fighting bitterly against the Helsinki government, and also about a widespread reign of terror instituted by the "Mannerheim clique." The Moscow *Trud*, for instance, wrote on January 3, 1940, that the "White Guard Finnish Government has arrested thousands of workers who did not wish to fight for the Mannerheim gang. The imprisoned workers are dying like flies; many have been executed," etc. This story was kept up by the Soviet press even during January, when it had become clear that the overwhelming majority of the Finns were willing to fight for their country.

In reality the Communist movement in Finland was an insignificant factor. At no time was there even the beginning of a revolt against the government, and police measures were limited. "In the first months of war," relates an

outside observer, Dr. S. Schwarz, "only a few hundred 'suspicious' individuals were arrested. Officially, I was given a somewhat smaller figure—about two hundred. However, most of the persons arrested were freed while the war was still on."<sup>44</sup>

Most reports about Finnish Communist activity came from regions occupied by the Red Army, from villages in the Karelian isthmus and around Petsamo. "In the occupied territories," wrote one of Kuusinen's ministers, Pravo Prokkonen, "there were organized committees of 'the working people's front.' Courageous Finnish workers help the committees in dealing with the property which will now belong to the entire people."<sup>45</sup>

As for the "Army of the Democratic Republic of Finland," few heard of it until February 25, when it was finally reported as having participated in action on the Finnish front.<sup>46</sup> This was two weeks before the end of the war.

In general, the activities of the Kuusinen "government" were limited to publishing a newspaper, *Kansan Valta*, and to carrying on anti-Helsinki propaganda from Soviet territory. Up to the very last day of the war Kuusinen kept on promising that he would overthrow the "Helsinki gang of White Guards." Even on March 8, when the Finnish peace delegates were already in Moscow, *Kansan Valta* published an appeal to the Finnish people "to turn their backs on the Mannerheims and Tanners" who were "doomed to extinction."<sup>47</sup>

Kuusinen was not consulted during the Russo-Finnish peace conference nor invited to it. After peace was concluded he was appointed editor of a small provincial newspaper.<sup>48</sup> Four months later, on July 10, he was elected President of the new Karelo-Finnish Republic (officially, Chairman of the Praesidium of this Republic's Supreme Soviet).

### 17. *Alliance between Finland and Germany?*

While the war had weakened the Republic of Finland, the terms of peace left it practically defenseless. But it was

not the destruction of the Mannerheim Line nor the loss of territory but problems of the immediate future that caused the greatest concern to the Finnish leaders. What guarantee had the Finns that Moscow had abandoned all aggressive intentions against them?

"There is a widespread belief," wrote Walter Kerr to the *New York Herald Tribune* in a Stockholm cable dated March 21, "that in the next few months the Soviet Union will try to do to Finland what Germany did to Czecho-Slovakia after Munich." Indeed, what assurances were there to the contrary? This fateful question was in the mind of everyone. The question, in all its bluntness, had already confronted the Finnish Government in its preliminary conversations with Moscow. If Finland acceded to the Soviet demands, who would guarantee the security of the new frontiers? In other words, who would be Finland's military ally in case Moscow decided to present new demands? Without an answer to this question, the entire Russo-Finnish peace was merely a scrap of paper.

Having made peace against the wishes of England and France, Finland now had to seek a guarantee of her borders from new allies. These could be either the Scandinavian states or Germany. Even before it had decided to sign the treaty with Russia, the Finnish Government was apparently negotiating in Stockholm and Oslo for the creation of a "defensive alliance" of the three "northern states." Two days after the signing of the Russo-Finnish peace, the Swedish and Norwegian Governments announced their readiness to conclude such an alliance. On March 20, however, Tass in an official communiqué, stated that

an alliance of this kind would be directed against the Soviet Union—as shown by the strongly anti-Soviet speech made on March 14 in the Norwegian Parliament by its Speaker, Mr. Hambro—and would run completely counter to the peace treaty concluded by the U. S. S. R. and Finland on March 12, 1940.

The Kremlin had reason to be offended by Hambro's speech. Hambro had said that the kind of peace which had been concluded between Finland and Russia "would not last long," and had called on the Finns to "win back



the borders of their country." On March 21 the Finnish delegates, Paasikivi and Voionmaa, discussed the proposed alliance with Molotov, who left no doubt as to Russia's attitude.

We are of the opinion, [said Molotov], that all questions between ourselves and Finland have been settled once and for all . . . The term "defensive alliance" makes no difference. The question is not solely one of defense but also of attack, of military revenge. Nothing is said openly about<sup>49</sup> attack, to be sure, but the label of an alliance is not significant.

On March 29, in a speech to the Supreme Soviet of the U. S. S. R., Molotov again affirmed Russia's attitude toward the proposed "defensive alliance" of the three northern states:

Soviet Russia had the power to occupy all of Finland. We chose not to use it—something that no other Great Power would have done—and were satisfied with the least possible minimum. We must repel every attempt to violate the peace treaty recently concluded. Finland has made such attempts, and Norway and Sweden as well, using as a pretext a military defensive alliance. It is not difficult to understand that these efforts are directed against the U. S. S. R. and that their objective is to gain satisfaction by avenging the war of 1939-40. The participation of Norway and Sweden in an alliance with Finland would mean that these countries have abandoned their traditional policy of neutrality for a new foreign policy, from which it would be impossible for the U. S. S. R. not to draw the obvious conclusions.

This threat was sufficient to prevent Sweden, Finland, and Norway from concluding the "defensive alliance."

However, even prior to the Russo-Finnish peace the Finns had realized that a "defensive alliance" with Sweden and Norway would not be powerful enough to guarantee Finland's new borders in case of a fresh attack by Russia. In as much as Germany was one of the powers which had put pressure on Finland to make peace, Helsinki quite naturally turned to Berlin with the query: Who will guarantee Finland against a new attack?

Berlin was in a difficult position. The defeat of Finland, Russia's acquisition of naval and military bases at Hanko and the strengthening of her position in the other Baltic States were certainly contrary to the interests of Germany.

Although Berlin had had to agree to many concessions to its Eastern neighbor, it could not acquiesce in further Russian expansion in Finland. On the other hand, in view of Germany's relations with Moscow, an open guarantee to Finland was out of the question. There are no official documents to tell us just how Germany surmounted this obstacle. Yet there are a number of isolated facts which indicate that even prior to the conclusion of the Russo-Finnish Treaty Berlin had secretly guaranteed Finland's new borders. In other words, even before March 12 Germany had already entered into a potential military alliance against Russia.

The former President of Finland, P. Svinhufvud, despite his seventy-nine years, had participated actively in the preliminary peace negotiations in Stockholm. Later he went on to Berlin and while the Finnish delegates were negotiating in Moscow he was received by Hitler in person. Thereupon he left immediately for Rome where Von Ribbentrop was conferring with Count Ciano and Mussolini. On March 9, the day of Svinhufvud's visit to Hitler, Havas reported that according to authoritative sources, "Germany will guarantee Finland's borders." At the same time the correspondent of the *New York Times* cabled from Stockholm:

The reported discussion of a guarantee of peace is probably taking place elsewhere than in Moscow . . . It is not known which European powers are involved in the proposal to guarantee the peace terms, but official circles are inclined to connect the trip of former President Svinhufvud to Germany and Italy with this phase of the peace question.<sup>50</sup>

It is possible that the question of a German guarantee of Finland's borders was broached during Svinhufvud's two-hour conversation with Von Ribbentrop on March 6. Additional light on this problem is shed by Virginia Cowles's account of her talks in Rome with Hitler's *confidant*, Prince Philip of Hesse, and Princess Mafalda, the daughter of the King of Italy. The story refers to early May, 1940.

"I hear," said the Prince of Hesse, "you spent the winter in Finland. Do tell me about it. I have a great admiration for the

Finns." For the next few minutes he plied me with questions, interrupting every now and then to praise Mannerheim's gallant resistance. In the middle of the conversation his wife, Princess Mafalda, entered the room.

"I was just talking about Finland," he explained. "I was telling Virginia how sorry we were in Berlin that we could not help the Finns. But, naturally, our pact with Russia prevented us from interfering."

"But, darling," said Princess Mafalda, "you *did* interfere. You told me you persuaded the Finns to sign the Peace Treaty by promising to put things right for them later on."

Prince Philip flushed. "Certainly not, you are completely mistaken. It was impossible for us to interfere. We had nothing at all to do with it."

"But, darling, you said . . ."

Prince Philip gave her a stern look; she lapsed into silence, and a few minutes later left the room.<sup>51</sup>

All indications point to Germany's having given some sort of a guarantee to Finland. It is possible that it was not set down in writing. Even the Finnish people knew little about it, and a German guarantee was never mentioned to the Finnish press. But there is no doubt but that the Kremlin was aware of it. This is confirmed by Moscow's attitude toward the Finns. Certainly the Kremlin was much more considerate of Finnish sensibilities than of those of other Baltic States. Finally, in November, 1940, Molotov found it necessary to confer with Hitler on Finland although, according to the Soviet-German Pact, the Finnish Republic fell within the Russian "sphere of interests."

That Germany had no thought of reconciling herself permanently to Russia's conquests in the Baltic is beyond doubt. "Germany will not be happy in sharing the Baltic with Russia," was the Berlin opinion, "and it is believed that she does not contemplate sharing it if she wins the war against the Western powers. That is taken to be Russia's view also of German intentions."<sup>52</sup>

Such, indeed, were Germany's intentions. As a result of the war with Finland, Russia had improved her strategic position. On the other hand, the war had brought about a rapprochement between Germany and Finland which could at any moment, and subsequently did, become an anti-Soviet military alliance.

## CHAPTER VII

### *WHILE GERMANY IS BUSY IN THE WEST*

#### *1. Russia's Balkan Neighbors*

WITH the signing of the Russo-Finnish Peace Pact there came to an end one phase of Soviet Russia's wartime foreign policy—its Baltic phase. Hitherto Moscow had been concerned primarily with the states bordering on her northwestern frontiers. After the Finnish peace was signed and after Russia's territorial acquisitions in the Baltic had reached the limit of her sphere, she turned her attention to the southwest—to the Danubian and Balkan States.

Of the territories which had formerly been included in the Czarist Empire the Rumanian province of Bessarabia was the most important as yet remaining outside the Soviet fold. It was now to become the focus of Soviet activity. There was, however, another important reason for the Kremlin to look toward the southeast of Europe: Italy's aims and ambitions. Neutral at the outbreak of hostilities, Italy was now beginning to assert herself in the European arena. This new factor brought to the fore the problem of the Danubian and Balkan States.

For a number of reasons Italy was at that period the country most hostile to Soviet Russia. Long after Germany had entered upon the path of collaboration with the Soviet, Italy still clung to the policy which the Axis had pursued during the Spanish Civil War, at the height of the "Popular Front" era in Europe. This policy had been followed consistently by Rome during the Russo-Finnish War, and now that the problem of Bessarabia was next on the Kremlin's list the Italian Government reacted militantly to all Russian hints of territorial revision in South-eastern Europe. The more active Italy, hitherto non-belligerent, now became in European affairs and the nearer the time came for her entry into the war on the side of

Germany, the more complicated the Axis partners found all problems connected with Russia.

At the moment when the peace treaty between Russia and Finland was being negotiated in Moscow, Joachim von Ribbentrop visited Rome to discuss Italy's active participation in the war. He spent several days there. Immediately after his return to Berlin on March 18, Hitler had his famous meeting with Mussolini at the Brenner Pass. Although no precise date was set at this meeting, there is no doubt but that the question of Italy's participation in the war at a later stage was discussed, as well as the question of Russia. What Rome sought was assurance of Russia's noninterference in the Balkans, since the latter were now to be considered as within the Italian sphere of interest.

To the German partner in the Axis the situation must have appeared altogether different. At the moment Berlin had no concrete plans in the Balkans, since the German High Command was preparing feverishly for the attack upon Scandinavia which took place three weeks after the Brenner Pass meeting, and also for an attack upon France, which began early in May. At this stage of the game Berlin could not be bothered with the Balkans. The Germans were about to embark upon extensive military operations in the West, and Russia's benevolent neutrality was of the utmost importance to their schemes. Germany could ill afford to let her relations with Moscow be beclouded, even lightly. Unlike Italy, Germany was prepared to make all kinds of promises and to cede any territory demanded by the Russians in the Balkans rather than disrupt her friendly relations with the Soviets.

Hitler needed Italy's entrance into the war in the Mediterranean in order to paralyze Anglo-French influence. To patch up the differences between Russia and Italy and at the same time to assure itself of favorable conditions in the West, Berlin undertook to work out a Balkan compromise with Moscow. Immediately upon Hitler's return from the Brenner Pass meeting rumors began to circulate in Berlin that Molotov was to visit the Capital for personal conversations with Hitler. Both the German Foreign

Office and the Soviet Embassy in Berlin had begun to make the necessary preparations for the visit. On March 23 the Rome radio reported that "Molotov arrived in Berlin today." However, the Soviet Foreign Commissar did not go to Berlin, and Moscow issued an official communiqué to the effect that "all rumors of Molotov's forthcoming trip to Berlin are absolutely baseless." Two days later Rome echoed Moscow's assertion that "there is not a word of truth" in the report that Molotov had arrived in Berlin or was even contemplating going there. Nevertheless Berlin was energetically at work, and rumors of Molotov's plan to visit Germany persisted.

Despite pressure from Berlin, however, Stalin refused to underwrite jointly with Italy the inviolability of Rumania's frontiers.\* By now his Balkan plans had gone far beyond the question of Bessarabia. After the Brenner meeting the Balkan States were gripped by fear of war and in a frantic search for military allies many of them turned to Moscow.

On March 29, in a speech to the Supreme Soviet of the U. S. S. R., Molotov reviewed Russia's foreign policy, indirectly referring to Italy and the Balkans in connection with the Bessarabian problem: "Of the neighboring states to the south, Rumania is one with which we have no pact of nonaggression. This is due to the existence of an unsettled dispute, the question of Bessarabia, whose seizure by Rumania the Soviet Union has never recognized."

This speech, delivered a few days after the reports that Molotov was already in Berlin, was a great disappointment to both Germany and Italy. Coupled with the fact that Soviet diplomats were negotiating with Yugoslav representatives at Ankara and that, after a long interruption, Maisky had reestablished contact with Lord Halifax, it caused great apprehension in Axis circles. Indeed, with Russia shifting the center of her diplomatic activities to

\* The London *Daily Herald* even reported on April 1, 1940, that "there are signs of a hint to the Allies that if Russia were assured of recovering Bessarabia after the war and retaining her other gains, she might be willing to change her whole policy towards the belligerents." This report, however, was merely a case of wishful thinking. If Russia did give such hints to London, it was obviously for the purpose of securing a bargaining point with Berlin.

the Balkans, a new political situation was arising, one radically different from that which had prevailed during the first stage of the war.

This, too, was the first indication of the basic differences between the policies of Moscow and Berlin. Russia, to be sure, was ready for far-reaching collaboration with Germany, but only with Germany and not with a coalition of Axis Powers. Hitler's primary aim, on the other hand, was to make Russia a component part of a large alliance first with Italy and later with Japan. Here, indeed, was the embryo of the break between Russia and Germany.

## *2. Agreements with Yugoslavia*

The situation in the Balkans was nothing if not complicated. Turkey, bound to England and France by her October treaty, was an avowed opponent of the Axis. Greece, in fear of an Italian attack, had received a British guarantee. Bulgaria was on friendly terms with Moscow. As a demonstration of friendly Russo-Bulgar relations, the first Soviet passenger plane had visited Sofia only five days after Mussolini's meeting with Hitler. But the center of the Balkan tangle was Yugoslavia, whose position was becoming more precarious every day.

Yugoslavia was a typical product of the first World War. In uniting the southern Slavs (Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes) she had within her borders territories formerly a part of Austria and Hungary. It was natural that in her foreign policy Yugoslavia, chief ally of France in the Balkans, adhered to the "Little Entente," i.e., to an alliance with Czechoslovakia and Rumania. But after Austria was annexed to Germany in March, 1938, after Hungary came into the German orbit, and after Germany had occupied Czechoslovakia, the Little Entente was destroyed and with it the entire diplomatic system of Yugoslavia. The conflict with Italy over Fiume had been endemic and Belgrade had never succeeded in establishing really friendly relations with Rome. Yugoslavia relied mainly on her pacts with the small mid-European states and on Entente support. But Poland and Czechoslovakia were no

longer in existence. Rumanian aid was a negligible factor, and France was taken up with her own military problems. One of the few states that had held out against recognition of the Soviets, Yugoslavia now decided to seek her salvation in Moscow.

From March 18, the date of the Brenner meeting, the Balkans were seething with rumors of an impending attack by Germany and Italy upon Yugoslavia. So far as Germany was concerned, these rumors were groundless. There is some uncertainty, however, as to Rome's actual plans with regard to Yugoslavia. Certainly the visit of Count Teleki, the Hungarian Foreign Minister, at this time to Rome did not augur well for Yugoslavia's independence.

At the end of March, 1940, Yugoslavia and Russia opened secret negotiations. These took place in Ankara in as much as neither country was represented at the other's capital. According to some sources, the Turkish Government, the ally of England and France, participated actively in the negotiations, which incidentally led to positive results at the close of three weeks. In accordance with the traditional pattern, the first steps were disguised as trade negotiations devoid of political significance. So far as the outside world was concerned the question of Belgrade's recognition of the Soviet Government had not even been broached.

Anxious to avoid creating the impression of an open break, the Italian press approved in principle the Russo-Yugoslav rapprochement. So did the German press. An official Moscow communiqué, however, went to some length to stress that Yugoslavia had taken the initiative in this rapprochement and that the preliminary negotiations had been carried on through Ankara and not through Berlin. "The Soviet Government," *Izvestiya* reported on April 20, "has instructed the Commissariat for Foreign Trade to take charge of this matter." On April 21 a Yugoslav delegation headed by the Minister of Finance, Grigorevich,\* left for Moscow. The Kremlin took pains

\* This transliteration of Slavic names follows that usually adopted in the American press.



to emphasize its purely economic mission: the delegation was received by the Commissar of Foreign Trade, Mikoyan, and dealt exclusively with commercial organizations while in Moscow. "The foreign press," wrote *Izvestiya*, "is spreading rumors about forthcoming political negotiations between the Soviet Government and the Yugoslav mission now in Moscow, the purpose of which it is said is to strengthen Yugoslavia in her relations with her neighbors. These rumors are pure invention."

A trade treaty was signed between Soviet Russia and Yugoslavia on May 11, and the Yugoslav mission returned to Belgrade. The Kremlin notwithstanding, the negotiations were also political in character, but even the trade treaty was more political than economic. The Soviet trade representatives in Belgrade were granted complete diplomatic status, including extraterritoriality and the right to make use of code in their communications with Moscow.

At the moment, however, the negotiations did not extend beyond the trade treaty; both Moscow and Belgrade, fearing a conflict with Italy, were not yet ready to go further. Upon the return of the trade mission to Belgrade it became known that negotiations with Moscow would not be continued and that the Yugoslav Government was reverting to its former attitude toward the Soviet regime. A cable of May 26, 1940, from Belgrade to the *New York Times*, stated:

It seems clear to this government now that there is little support to be found in the Kremlin, and there is a tendency to resume the original attitude of distaste for the Soviets which is traditional with the regime. The Yugoslav-Russian trade conversations were not overwhelmingly successful politically. Yugoslavia received the impression that Soviet Russia was not prepared to act as her protector.

On May 30 the *Times* correspondent cabled again:

The Belgrade government was privately extremely disappointed in the outcome of the recent talks in Moscow. There is as yet no question of any sort of pact between the two countries.

The Kremlin's negotiations with Belgrade are particularly interesting because of the parallelism which they

introduced into Russian and British foreign policy. In Rome it was realized only too well how vital it was to England and France for Yugoslavia to remain independent. "Although London has not given a direct guarantee to Yugoslavia," said a London dispatch to the *Popolo di Roma* of April 30, "there is no doubt but that Britain will go to the aid of Yugoslavia if she is attacked." At the same time the Yugoslavs were also seeking support in Moscow. Although the Kremlin issued a vehement denial of "rumors that the Soviet Government, in agreement with Rumania, will go to the aid of Yugoslavia if the latter is attacked by Italy,"<sup>1</sup> there is no doubt but that the spearhead of Russo-Yugoslav negotiations was aimed at Italy.

In this diplomatic game both Moscow and Rome were proceeding with caution. The Russo-Yugoslav negotiations, stated the Italian *Informazione del Giorno* of April 18, "do not change Italy's attitude. Count Ciano had informed the Chamber that Italy's aims do not lead to any ostracism of Russia as a Bolshevik state, but that she is resolved to oppose any expansion of Communism in Europe."

The tone of the Soviet press toward Italy was a more bellicose one. While the Yugoslav mission was still in Moscow, the newspaper *Trud* charged Rome with attempted blackmail: "Lacking the power to fight England and France, Italy seeks to gain through blackmail."<sup>2</sup> The relations between the two countries in the early stages of the Balkan crisis are also illustrated by the history of the Russo-Italian Trade Pact, which had expired early in the year. Italy at first moved to renew it but Moscow insisted on new conditions, which Count Ciano refused to accept. The entire question became academic, however, when on May 16 the Soviet press hinted of a parallelism in Russo-British interests toward Italy:

If the Italian forces on the Island of Pantelleria threaten the English base at Malta, then the Dodecanese Islands, where Rome has concentrated thousands of troops, may play a vital role in strategic plans threatening the interests of Soviet Russia and of those Eastern countries friendly to her.

As if to underscore the official significance of this charge, the article was published simultaneously in *Pravda*, in *Red*

*Star*, and in *Izvestiya*. At the same time British warships appeared in the Aegean Sea, in the vicinity of Saloniki, while Greece opened for traffic the new strategic railroad leading direct from Saloniki to the Bulgarian border. Moscow reinforced her garrison on the border of Carpathian Russia for the obvious purpose of deterring the Hungarians from establishing contact with the Italians for a joint attack upon Yugoslavia. Both the Yugoslavs and Hungarians commenced simultaneously a partial mobilization of their armed forces. Finally, Italy, according to Mussolini's spokesman, Virginio Gayda, "adopted some precautionary measures in the Balkans," transferring to Albania some 25,000 "militarized workers."

By the end of April the Yugoslav authorities had begun the evacuation of children from Belgrade and were making many arrests among German inhabitants in the capital. Among those also arrested were the pro-German former Premier, Milan Stoyadinovich, and the former Belgrade Chief of Police, Milan Ahimovich, who it was said received money from both the Germans and the Italians. Yugoslavia awaited an Italian attack at any moment. But Italy did not attack. In general, Rome refrained from any aggressive action against the Yugoslavs at that time. This was largely due to the policy of Berlin, which feared more than anything else angering the Kremlin and losing the benefits of Soviet neutrality.

A radical turn occurred in June, on the eve of the Soviet occupation of Bessarabia. A political rapprochement rapidly took place between Moscow and Belgrade, and their improved relations resulted in Belgrade's decision to recognize Soviet Russia. The first Yugoslav Envoy, Milan Gavrilovich, appointed on June 24, 1940, was to play an important role in the Soviet-Balkan policy in the following year.

### 3. *A Bloc of Neutrals?*

On April 20 the Berlin radio issued a list of governments and statesmen who had congratulated Hitler on his birthday. Neither Stalin nor Molotov was mentioned, although

only four months previously both Hitler and Von Ribbentrop had congratulated Stalin warmly on his sixtieth birthday. A minor incident, but symptomatic of the new relations between the two countries. By April 20 Russo-German collaboration had already changed considerably in character; much dissatisfaction existed on both sides. The Balkan situation, contrary to the wishes of both Berlin and Moscow, had marred their relations. While Germany was planning to bring Italy into the war, Moscow threatened to seek contact with London. The honeymoon of Russo-German collaboration was over. Although both countries continued to cooperate down to the very moment when Germany attacked the Soviets in 1941, the period of their undimmed friendship had definitely ended in April, 1940.

At this moment, however, neither Berlin nor Moscow considered or even envisaged a rupture in relations. Certainly Moscow did not desire a break with Berlin, while Germany had long since arrived at the conviction that a conflict with Russia before she had won a decisive victory in the West would endanger her successful conclusion of the war.

On April 10 Germany opened operations against Denmark and Norway, and on the 11th her Envoy in Moscow, Count von der Schulenburg, spent four hours in conference with Molotov. Russia had not been informed in advance of the new offensive, and the Kremlin feared that if military operations extended to Sweden the Germans would make contact with Russia's enemies the Finns. Molotov demanded that Sweden's neutrality remain inviolate. Again Berlin assented. The official agency Tass issued a communiqué reporting that "it is the view of both countries that their mutual interests require the neutrality of Sweden." Rumors were abroad in the Scandinavian countries that the Germans, who had now transferred their military operations to the Baltic, would seize the Aland Islands as a direct threat to Soviet-occupied Hankö. Possibly the German High Command had originally had some such plan in mind, but again the Wilhelmstrasse was afraid to cross the path of neutral Moscow. It

must not be forgotten that Ambassador Maisky had just then reestablished contact with Lord Halifax for the purpose of renewing "trade negotiations."

In the Balkans Germany strove to maintain a balance between Italy and Russia. Hence the repeated declarations by Berlin that Germany had no designs on Yugoslav independence. On the contrary the Berlin government, in fulfillment of previous agreements, continued to send arms to Yugoslavia;<sup>3</sup> the Berlin correspondent of the important Belgrade newspaper, *Politika*, also received assurances from Von Ribbentrop that "Germany had no aggressive designs upon Yugoslavia; that rumors about the presence of German troops in Carinthia or about the infiltration of German 'tourists' into Yugoslavia had no basis in fact."

The cordial tone of the German press and Berlin's readiness to compromise met with a warm response in Moscow. When German armies carried war to Scandinavia, the Soviet press and radio were instructed to blame England and France for spreading the war to new parts of Europe. The Berlin version that Britain had been preparing to violate Norway's neutrality and had thus forced Germany to strike first was seconded by the entire Soviet press. On April 11 *Izvestiya* commented that "Germany was forced" to attack in Scandinavia and, following the long-established pattern, England and France were accused of being "warmongers." Even the first of May declaration of the Communist International—the last public pronouncement of the Comintern—blamed the Western "warmongers" exclusively for Germany's acts of aggression.

However, Moscow now tried to rally the smaller nations around itself to protect their neutrality. With Finland's fate still fresh in their memories, it was indeed strange for the smaller nations to seek a protector in Russia. Yet so great was the fear of Germany's next move that both Sweden and Yugoslavia turned to Moscow for aid, and it was perhaps through Russia's intervention that both these countries escaped being involved in war at that time. The Swedes began to look to Russia as their savior from the German menace. Some Swedes spoke of Russia, so greatly feared in March, as if she might become Sweden's best

friend. They believed that Russia was sharing Sweden's interest in the neutrality of the Baltic shores.<sup>4</sup> Stalin, of course, was not at all averse to figuring as the savior of the smaller states. The Moscow radio stated gleefully on May 11 that "Soviet Russia had saved Sweden from war. The Soviets have erected a barrier against the spread of the war to the east of Europe."

On April 14, when the date for the arrival of the Yugoslav trade mission had already been set, the Moscow radio broadcast the advice to the smaller nations "to make common cause with the larger states in order to assure their status of neutrality." With this the Kremlin was launching its candidacy as protector of the smaller states. This bit of advice represented a new twist in Soviet foreign policy and was a straw indicating that Moscow intended to pursue a policy independent of Berlin.

The invitation to the smaller states did not fall upon deaf ears, and it also enabled the Kremlin to stave off for a time the spread of the war to the Balkans, at least until Germany was free to give her undivided attention to Southeastern Europe. Meanwhile, when the Soviet Minister to Bulgaria, Arkadi Lavrentiev, paid the first visit by a Soviet diplomat to Belgrade, he was received by Prince Regent Paul, whose anti-Communist views were well known—his mother was a Russian princess, and the Prince had spent much of his childhood at the Czarist Court—and Yugoslav students piled out on the streets of Belgrade with demands for a "military alliance with Russia." Both Bulgaria and Yugoslavia were anxiously awaiting "a hint from Russia" as to what she would do in case of an Italian-German attack in the Balkans.<sup>5</sup> Even Turkey, at that time a full-fledged partner of the Anglo-French bloc, was awaiting some sign from Russia. Ankara's policy was in large measure conditioned upon the action that Moscow would take. On June 6 a report emanating from Moscow stated that the Kremlin was favorably disposed toward Turkey's plans to resist Italian aggression in the East, there was even a hint that Russia might come to Turkey's aid in such an eventuality.<sup>6</sup>

Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Turkey, too, were definitely

ready to close collaboration with Russia, especially against Italy's designs in the East. Thus, almost spontaneously a bloc of small states situated between Russia and Italy seemed to come into being to assure the status quo in the Balkans.

On May 7 a Budapest report explained this entire problem quite succinctly and correctly:

It is understood that Russia is aiming at establishing a chain of buffer states between the Soviet and the rest of Europe and is showing active interest in all countries in the area. At the same time Russia implies that if anyone makes a move to push the Balkans into war she will conclude a proposed military alliance with Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. If this is done Russia will sponsor a revival of the Pan-Slavist movement in South-eastern Europe.<sup>7</sup>

As one direct result of the Balkan situation, Soviet Russia embarked upon her new Pan-Slavic policy, which she was later to use to great advantage. Pan-Slavism as such was alien to the ideology of Bolshevism, but as far as the Slavic countries of the Balkans were concerned it was an opportune move.

The first product of Russia's new policy in the Balkans was her demand for a seat in the European Danube Commission. This commission which had regulated traffic on the lower Danube had been reorganized after the World War. Its members were Italy, France, Great Britain, and Germany from 1939. Soviet Russia, for obvious political reasons, had not been given representation.\*

Because of the impact of the war the Danube had now become of tremendous economic importance to Germany. The river was now plied primarily by German vessels and barges, and all its ports were controlled by agents of German firms. Already in February, 1940, when the European Danube Commission met in the Rumanian city of Galatz (incidentally, the German, British, and French

\* This Danube Commission was not identical with the so-called "International Commission of the Danube" which regulated the navigation on the upper Danube and was composed of members of the European Commission as well as representatives of the riparian states. Late in 1940 Germany replaced these two commissions by a new one, from which England and France were excluded. (See below, Chapter X, § 3)

delegates sat together peacefully at this conference), it became known that Soviet Russia, too, was demanding a place in the Commission. At that time Russian participation was generally interpreted as strengthening Germany's hand. But when on May 19 Molotov raised the question of admitting Russia to the European Commission, it was obviously for the purpose of watching over German activities on the Danube. This was the only interpretation Berlin could have given it. Bulgaria and Yugoslavia supported Russia's request.<sup>8</sup> By the beginning of May Yugoslavia had mobilized 300,000 men, 150,000 of whom were concentrated on the Italian and German frontiers. Speculation was rife as to whether Italy would strike first at France or in the Balkans. Each day brought new and disturbing rumors. Italy was straining all her efforts to allay suspicion in the Balkans, but no one believed the protestations of her peaceful intent. Even at the beginning of June, when Rome had already decided upon a definite strategic plan and part of her army had been shifted from the Balkan to the French frontier, there was widespread belief that within a few days Italy would attack Yugoslavia. On June 4 the Moscow *Trud* referred to it as a certainty. In general, Moscow did not put much stock in Rome's Balkan promises. On June 6, four days before the Italian Army attacked France, the Moscow radio announced officially:

The Soviet Government has made it unequivocally clear to Italy that it will not remain passive in the face of a threat to the Balkans. The foreign policy of Soviet Russia is based upon a sincere desire to maintain peace, and also upon the fact that the independence of certain states is a vital condition for Soviet security. The Italian Government will do well to take this warning into account.<sup>9</sup>

On June 10 Italy entered the war on the side of Germany by attacking France.

#### 4. *Winston Churchill and Sir Stafford Cripps*

Despite the strained relations with Italy, Moscow neither hoped for nor desired collaboration with Britain



and France. No matter how difficult it was at times to go along with Germany, and particularly with Italy, England and France were regarded by Moscow as implacable foes who boded ill to the Soviets. In his speech of March 29 to the Supreme Soviet Molotov declared:

In Syria and in the Near East generally extensive and suspicious activity is afoot in the creation of Anglo-French, mainly colonial, armies headed by General Weygand. We must exercise vigilance in regard to attempts to utilize these colonial and non-colonial troops for purposes hostile to the Soviet Union. Any such attempt would evoke on our part countermeasures against the aggressors.

In this connection Molotov also mentioned Russia's neighbors (Turkey and Iran) "who wished to become pawns of this aggressive policy directed against the U. S. S. R." This was the predominant theme of most Russian public statements of that period. All propaganda emanating from the Kremlin centered on the Anglo-French "imperialists," who "have started a suspicious fuss in the Near East, particularly in Syria," and who "have tried by every means to create new centers of war against the Soviet Union."<sup>10</sup>

At this time an open letter, signed by George Bernard Shaw and the noted socialists, H. S. Brailsford and Charles Trevelyan, was published in London calling upon the British Government to renounce all aggressive aims against the Soviets and urging the need for Russo-British collaboration. It was only natural that this letter should have been welcomed by the Soviet press. Unlike the French, English socialists and many prominent members of the British Labor party favored collaboration with Soviet Russia. Even Lloyd George, once a foe of the Soviets, in an article published in the Estonian newspaper, *Rakhvalekht*, expressed his regret over Germany's success in developing her diplomatic activity in Southeastern Europe in cooperation with Russia and insisted that the Allies too should turn to Russia. However, while Neville Chamberlain was Premier these pro-Soviet tendencies could make no headway. With the fall of his government they gained the upper hand in Britain.

As soon as Winston Churchill had been elevated to the Premiership, and representatives of the Labor party had joined his Cabinet, Downing Street decided to send a small "trade delegation" to Moscow, headed by Sir Stafford Cripps. An outstanding lawyer, former Solicitor General in Ramsay MacDonald's Cabinet, Cripps had been expelled in January, 1939, from the British Labor party for extreme "Leftism." An adherent of the most radical wing of British socialism, he belonged, however, to that relatively numerous group of Englishmen who believe that by employing proper means all men can be won over to the good cause. The round table was their chief method, both in domestic policy and in international affairs. Failing to take cognizance of deep antagonisms in the policies of both Great Britain and Soviet Russia, Sir Stafford was convinced that he would be able to persuade the Soviet leaders.

He had visited Moscow some months before Churchill became Premier; it was only logical for him to be Churchill's choice when Downing Street finally decided to send a special mission to Soviet Russia. Moscow, however, still had one eye cocked on Berlin and refused to recognize Cripps as London's special envoy on the ground that ambassadors were the proper persons to carry on diplomatic negotiations. Britain, said the Kremlin, had the choice of sending back Ambassador Seeds, who had left Moscow after the outbreak of Russo-Finnish hostilities, or appointing another ambassador in his place. No need for "special envoys." As Tass put it: "If the British Government wishes to renew trade negotiations and not to limit itself to talks about the nonexistent shift in the relations between England and the U. S. S. R., this can be done through the British Ambassador in Moscow."

Downing Street solved the problem by accrediting Sir Stafford as Ambassador to Russia.\* Incidentally, this decision coincided with the appointment of Erik Labonne as the Ambassador of France. Thus, Moscow's protestations notwithstanding, these two appointments created

\* He received no compensation for his post, however, other than £6,250 (about \$25,000) per year for expenses.

the definite impression of a serious shift in the relations of England and France to Russia.

Cripps reached Moscow at the beginning of June. Shortly after, a minor but not unsymptomatic incident occurred. On June 13, the birthday of King George VI, Premier Molotov left his calling card at the British Embassy, the first time since the revolution that a Russian premier had done so. This gesture took place exactly two months after Molotov had ignored the birthday of the German Führer and *Reichskanzler*.

## CHAPTER VIII

### *THE FAR EAST (1939—JUNE, 1940)*

#### *I Soviet-Japanese Relations*

JAPAN'S foreign policy during 1938-41 shows two separate periods: before and after the defeat of France and Holland in May and June, 1940. During the first of these periods Japan's activity was centered primarily on the war in China. But after the middle of 1940 Tokyo proceeded to the struggle for the Pacific and the whole of Asia, by active and energetic preparations for the coming war with Great Britain and the United States, and the "China Incident" became merely one phase of the struggle for the domination of Asia.

In the two preceding decades Russo-Japanese relations were determined largely in a one-sided manner by the fact that Japan was the aggressive power in Eastern Asia, threatening both Russia and China. Depending upon which of the two states was the weaker at the moment, Japan directed her policy of conquest either northward to the Russian Far East or southward against China.

After the Revolution of 1917 Japan was the power most persistent in her intervention in Russia. It lasted longer than that of any other foreign power, and the Soviet Government was able to liberate its Far Eastern provinces only after long and arduous efforts and not without a number of substantial concessions.

In the middle of the 1920's Japan turned for conquest toward the South. Her hostile attitude toward the Soviets remained unchanged, however. It was at the end of the 20's that Tokyo began to give shape to its grandiose schemes of military conquest which are known in contemporary history as the "Tanaka Program," "Eastern Asiatic Co-Prosperity Sphere," and so on. In these plans Russian and Chinese possessions figured prominently. Under the circumstances the identity and solidarity of

Russo-Chinese interests were already so axiomatic that a military alliance with China appeared as an elementary requisite of Soviet foreign policy.

In general, the relations between the Soviet Union and other states had varied from country to country and also from one period to another. There had been times of friction and of more or less friendly association. Particularly with Germany in the latter part of the 20's and early 30's Soviet relations were cordial and at times even friendly. Japan was the sole exception. Not once since the Revolution did Moscow's relations with Tokyo even approach the normal, the Soviet Union was for Japan *the* "hereditary" enemy. Conversely, Japan's relations with other powers had varied, but only toward Soviet Russia had her policy remained consistently inimical, since the entire grand plan of Nipponese expansion was contingent upon the weakening of Russia.

The union between Soviet Russia and China, then, was primarily a defensive alliance. To be sure, it was clothed in a form that corresponded most closely to specific Soviet ideology. The Soviet-Chinese military alliance was ostensibly directed against the "capitalist powers," as a tool in the struggle against foreign imperialism. However, in the 30's, when Chiang Kai-shek's armies were fighting desperately against the overwhelmingly superior and better-equipped forces of Japan, that ideology became a handicap to the Chinese people, for the Chinese Communist armies, with a distinct foreign policy of their own, clashed with the aims and purposes of the National Government.

Soviet aid to China was never very extensive, certainly not sufficient to drive the Japanese out of Chinese territory. Russia had her own problems in Europe which called for military preparation and her not-too-well-developed industry was overtaxed as it was. Nevertheless she gave the Chinese enough to enable them to harass the Japanese and to rob them of the sweet fruit of a quick victory. The struggle against Russia on the Asiatic continent thus became one of the basic problems of Japanese foreign policy.

The Anti-Comintern Pact concluded in November, 1936, shortly before Japan embarked upon her conquest of China, was one of the main instruments of Tokyo's policy toward Russia. Indeed, Japan attributed greater significance to the Anti-Comintern Pact than did Germany and Italy. She saw in it an effective deterrent to Soviet action in the Far East, a ready instrument for eventual military conflict with Russia. The Anti-Comintern Pact was by no means a military alliance, but Japan hoped that should the necessity arise she would be able to draw military advantages from a nonmilitary agreement.

A chronic cause of disagreement between Moscow and Tokyo was the question of the border line separating Manchukuo from Soviet Russia. This border had been established on the basis of an agreement reached between Russia and the Chinese Empire. In 1938 Tokyo refused, however, to recognize the validity of the frontier, claiming, among other things, that she had not been sufficiently acquainted with the earlier agreements (particularly with the secret Hun-chun agreement) and with the geographic maps attached to them. One of the Japanese aims was to extend Manchukuo's borders at the expense of Outer Mongolia which was (and is) to all intents and purposes a Soviet protectorate. Minor though this question was, it resulted in numerous clashes and border incidents between Japanese and Soviet troops.

Another cause for friction was the question of the Far Eastern fishing waters which belong to Soviet Russia. To Japan these fisheries are of great economic interest as a vital source of food supply, and she was granted the right to fish in these waters by the Portsmouth Treaty of 1905, following the Russo-Japanese War. The Soviet authorities subsequently divided those coastal waters into several distinct districts, some of which would be leased on bids for definite periods to Japanese fishing companies. Over a long period of years Japan insisted on getting as many districts as possible and also on securing longer-term leases. Russia, on the other hand, guided partly by reasons of strategy, was constantly decreasing the number of fishing districts she was ready to lease to the Japanese, while the term of

the agreements depended primarily upon the political and diplomatic relations that existed between the two countries at a given moment. When these relations were extremely unfavorable (as was the case, for instance, following the conclusion of the Anti-Comintern Pact) the Nar-komindel would lease the waters for a term of one year only. Since the fishing season usually began in the spring and ended in the fall this meant that the Japanese were forced to be in constant negotiations with Russia, and this usually resulted in serious diplomatic conflicts between the two countries.

For a number of years Tokyo and Moscow were also in persistent controversy over the Chinese Eastern Railway. This railway, which had been constructed by the Czarist Government on Manchurian territory, fell in the 1930's, as a result of the occupation of Manchukuo, into the hands of the Japanese. In 1935 the Soviet Government, after long and heated negotiations, consented to sell Russia's share in the railway to the Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo for the relatively small sum of 140,000,000 yen which, moreover, was to be paid in installments over a period of several years. Japan, however, undertook to guarantee the prompt payment of these annual installments. But subsequently the "government" of Manchukuo presented counterclaims to Russia and withheld the last payment, while Tokyo completely ignored its guarantee to the Soviets.

The fourth point of Russo-Japanese disagreement was the so-called Japanese concessions on the northern part of Sakhalin Island. This was the last capitalist concession on Russian territory which the Soviet Government suffered long after Lenin's policy of concessions to foreign capitalists had been abandoned. The relations between the workers and the Japanese concessionaires were a constant source of friction, whenever Russo-Japanese relations were strained. In retaliation the Japanese would curtail production on the concessions, which would in turn arouse the ire of the Soviet Government. The production of oil, for instance, which had previously reached 200,000 tons per year, fell very low by 1939.

Finally there was the question of mutual trade. From about 1934 onward Russo-Japanese trade was constantly on the decrease and by 1939 it, too, almost reached the zero point. From time to time the question of improving it would be raised either by the one or the other side, but this would invariably end in a stalemate.

## 2. *The Conflicts of 1939*

It was, however, in connection with the Anti-Comintern Pact that Japan suffered her first setback in her relations with Germany. By 1938 Germany was preoccupied with a number of European problems other than Russia and the struggle with her Eastern neighbor was not always in the center of her diplomatic activity. To Japan, on the other hand, the Russo-Chinese question remained the one of prime urgency on the political agenda. In the summer of 1938 a series of "border incidents" took place between Russia and Japan on the Manchurian frontier, which soon developed into a serious military conflict, particularly in the region of Lake Hasan to the west of the Soviet port of Vladivostok. Japan demanded territorial concessions which the Soviets categorically refused to grant. For a moment it seemed as though war between the two countries was imminent.

In the months of July-August, 1938, Tokyo approached Berlin with a proposal for joint action against Russia. But Germany was at that moment deeply involved in the Sudeten problem (it was the eve of Munich) and was not ready as yet to embark upon a more active policy toward Russia.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, Berlin still had many serious diplomatic difficulties to overcome, and a conflict with Moscow at that time might have resulted in a united front of Czechoslovakia, Rumania (in coöperation perhaps with the Western Powers), and Poland.\* Tokyo, however, was deeply discomfited by Germany's negative reply and the

\* "The Reich realizes that it has in Japan an embarrassing ally on its hands. If the Sino-Japanese conflict confronted German foreign policy with highly uncomfortable developments, there is added reason to view with even greater apprehension the possibilities of serious international complication along the Manchukuo border" (*New York Times*, August 10, 1938)



agreement she was therefore forced to sign with Litvinov was to some extent a diplomatic retreat for her and loss of face.

The agreement was reached on August 10, 1938. Japan and Russia obligated themselves to end their military conflicts in the region of Changkufeng and Lake Hasan and to leave the final demarcation of the frontier to a special mixed border commission. But this was a long way from settling matters. In spite of the agreement, the winter of 1938-39 was full of various border conflicts between the two countries. The mixed commission could not find a common basis for agreement. In addition, the conflict over the fisheries became sharper as Moscow now decided to reduce the number of fishing districts by thirty-seven, claiming that this action was prompted by considerations of strategy. The Japanese Government categorically refused to consent to the reduction. After a number of fruitless *démarches* the Japanese Ambassador in Moscow, Shigenori Togo, notified Litvinov on February 22, 1939, that Japanese fishermen would do their fishing under the protection of armed vessels. Litvinov replied that the conflict would then no longer be of a local character. Togo, however, insisted that "the Japanese Government will protect Japanese interests."

The Soviet Government announced that bids for the fisheries would be made on March 18. The Japanese failed to appear to bid and Soviet fishing enterprises obviously not without instructions from above, leased only one-fifth of the districts. New bids were announced again for April 3,<sup>2</sup> but on the 2d an agreement was reached between Russia and Japan whereby the number of fishing districts was reduced by twenty-seven and the rental was increased by 10 per cent.

All this coincided with the outbreak, during February and March, of new border conflicts. In Sakhalin, too, the struggle between the concessionaires and the trade-unions became more intense. In this connection, on March 12, at the conference of the Russian Communist party held in Moscow, a delegate by the name of Donskoi, representing the Far Eastern district of Khabarovsk, made a direct

threat to Japan, not without having first received, of course, the assent and perhaps the encouragement of the Narkomindel.

"Our commanders and political workers," said Donskoi, "are ready and prepared to repeat on a larger scale for our restless neighbors the lessons of Hasan with this difference, perhaps, that our mighty 'teachers' will come home to the restless pupils with all the necessary equipment. This time they will go beyond the Amur, beyond Ussuri and Hangan, and let those gentlemen not complain if the lessons be rather severe."<sup>3</sup>

### 3. *Axis Pressure*

During the spring of 1939 Moscow began negotiations with London. Tokyo was particularly disturbed by the rumors of an impending agreement between England, France, and Russia, since during the first stage of Anglo-Russian negotiations the Narkomindel insisted also upon the inclusion of the Far East in the proposed agreement. In other words, in her negotiations with Britain Moscow was trying to forge a two-edged weapon, one edge of which was aimed at Germany and the other at Japan. England, as already indicated, flatly refused to discuss the Far East. At that time Maxim Litvinov was removed as Soviet Foreign Commissar. Tokyo, which viewed all Anglo-Russian negotiations primarily as they related to the Far East, at once interpreted Litvinov's fall as an indication of Moscow's dissatisfaction with London's refusal to include the Far East in an all-embracing agreement.<sup>4</sup> But even if the negotiations had resulted in an exclusively anti-German alliance Japan would have had cause for displeasure, since her primary aim was to isolate the Soviets. After the Anti-Comintern Pact had, as it seemed, successfully isolated Russia from Germany, Japan had now to fear an Anglo-Russian understanding.

On May 9, 1939, at a conference of Japanese governors, Foreign Minister Arita declared categorically:

Japan cannot treat lightly an entente between Britain and Russia even if it does not apply to the Far East . . . Japan intends to

strengthen the Anti-Comintern Pact and cope with the tense international situation from our own autonomous standpoint.<sup>5</sup>

The persistent Japanese protests against the proposed alliance of the Anglo-French bloc with Soviet Russia exerted a strong influence upon Downing Street—one more argument against the type of comprehensive alliance that Moscow was demanding. The theory was that Great Britain could ill afford to anger Tokyo and risk the danger of becoming involved in war on two far-flung fronts—on the European continent and in the Far East. Thus, at least in this respect, Japanese diplomacy achieved a certain measure of success.

By this time, however, a cloud had settled over Japan's relations with Germany. In the spring of 1939 German foreign policy underwent a radical change; Czechoslovakia had been successfully liquidated, and the questions of Eastern Europe were now on Hitler's agenda. Hitler was not certain as yet whether he would succeed in gaining Poland's aid for an attack upon Russia or conversely whether he would have to woo the Soviets before attacking Poland. Until the middle of April, 1939, he hoped to gain Poland's agreement for a joint attack upon the Soviets, and it was in this connection that he offered to transform the so-called ideological Anti-Comintern Pact into a genuine military alliance.

The negotiations between Berlin-Rome and Tokyo for the formation of such an alliance were quite prolonged and were carried on at times in a very tense atmosphere. Japan objected to an alliance which Germany sought to exploit not only against Russia but also against her Western adversaries. At the moment Japan did not feel strong enough to become involved in a conflict with the combined fleets of England and France and perhaps also of the United States. Her primary aim was to limit her military operations—insofar as they might involve a Great Power—to Soviet Russia, and she was irritated with Berlin for seeking to exploit the Anti-Comintern Pact strictly in its own European interests. Thus, when Spain signed the pact on April 8, 1939, Japan, although outwardly pleased, made

it clear unofficially that she did not regard this as strengthening the anti-Russian front but the anti-British and anti-French. In other words, Japan was virtually saying to Berlin and Rome that while she was ready to struggle against Bolshevism—which was the proclaimed purpose of the Anti-Comintern Pact—fighting the democracies was not her task.

The Japanese diplomatic representatives in Berlin and Rome, however, were fervent supporters and exponents of the type of military union proposed by Hitler. They kept on insisting and even demanding of Tokyo that such an alliance be consummated. But after an endless series of conferences (there were actually a hundred of them in the months of March and April, 1939) the Japanese Government decided on April 27 to decline Berlin's proposal. Hitler, it was rumored, was so enraged that Baron Hiroshi Oshima did not dare to inform him in person of Tokyo's decision. Soon after, on May 22, Germany and Italy signed their mutual military pact without the participation of Japan. Its value, however, was considerably decreased by Italy's declaration (not published at that time) that she would not be ready for war for a few years.<sup>6</sup> At the same time Berlin began its negotiations with Moscow.

Just as Japan's vigorous protests to London against a Russo-British alliance influenced considerably Chamberlain's policy toward the Soviets, so, too, Tokyo's refusal to join in a military alliance with Germany became one of the many reasons which caused Hitler, in the month of May, 1939, to seek an understanding with Russia. Indeed, his irritation with the unreliable ally in the Far East was to him another argument in favor of a Russo-German rapprochement.

At a somewhat later date—in August, 1939—the diplomatic situation took another turn. By this time Russo-German negotiations for an understanding were already far advanced. Japan was only unofficially aware of this since the Hitler government failed to keep Tokyo informed officially of the course of the Russo-German negotiations. Japan was both irritated and apprehensive. A Russo-German agreement such as was being contemplated was ex-

tremely dangerous to her position. It meant complete isolation and the loss of a powerful anti-Soviet ally. Moreover, just at that time—in the summer of 1939—she became involved in a number of serious conflicts with the British Government over China. As a result the Japanese Envoys in Rome and Berlin met at the beginning of August in Cernobbio to discuss again Japan's adherence to the Italo-German alliance. But neither their deliberations nor their decision could any longer affect the situation or meet with success since Berlin's attitude was now rather cool and indifferent.

Thus, although on the surface the Anti-Comintern Pact was ostensibly an expression of a solidarity of the anti-Soviet states, behind the scenes an intense conflict was raging between Germany and Japan, the essence of which was that Germany wanted to use the Anti-Comintern Pact as a weapon against England and France, whereas Japan was mainly interested in it only in so far as it aided her in her struggle against Russia.

#### 4. *Armed Conflict on the Manchurian Border*

Russo-Japanese military operations on the Manchurian border in the summer of 1939 had all the earmarks of a full-fledged war. The first skirmish occurred on May 11 on the river Halha, which marks the border between Manchuria and Outer Mongolia, and from the 13th on there were daily minor conflicts. But on May 28 and 29 they assumed serious proportions. Then hostilities were suspended for about three weeks, and thereafter both sides began to employ their aviation and each claimed that the other had thrown 60 airplanes into the fight. On July 1 the Japanese began a large-scale offensive, which, however, was not prosecuted very vigorously. They resumed it on July 23, this time both sides employing not only heavy guns but also tanks. By the end of August a bloody battle was in progress. It soon turned out that the Soviets had the superiority in tanks, and the Japanese losses, according to Tokyo sources, reached 18,000 in dead and wounded.<sup>7</sup>

On May 31, 1939, Molotov, who had in the meantime taken Litvinov's place as Foreign Commissar, stated at the Third Session of the Supreme Soviet of the U. S. S. R.:

I give warning that the borders of the Mongolian People's Republic, by virtue of the mutual assistance treaty concluded between us, will be defended by the U. S. S. R. just as vigorously as we shall defend our own borders . . . It is high time that it be understood that there is a limit to our patience. It is by far better to cease right now the constantly recurring provocative violation of the borders of the U. S. S. R. and Mongolia by the Japanese-Manchurian military units. We have also given a similar warning to Tokyo through the Japanese Envoy in Moscow.

Following the conclusion of the Russo-German Pact of August, 1939, the political situation in Europe changed again. This time it was the Japanese Ambassador in Moscow, Togo, who approached the Narkomindel with an offer to liquidate all military operations in Manchuria. On September 15, following brief negotiations, an agreement was signed between the two countries which ended armed hostilities.

"The conflict arose," Molotov declared, in his later review of the international situation before the Supreme Soviet, "as a result of Japanese intent to annex part of the territory of the Mongolian People's Republic and thereby alter in their favor the Mongolian-Manchurian border." This "unnecessary conflict," he further stated, "has resulted in a considerable number of victims on our side although there were several times more on the Japanese Manchurian side . . . Now one can say that there is a prospect of improved relations between the U. S. S. R. and Japan."<sup>8</sup>

In the meantime an agreement was signed settling the old conflict over Northern Sakhalin which had been a constant source of friction since 1937. Togo presented the Narkomindel with a long memorandum on this subject on April 27. In as much as the Sakhalin dispute was formally between the Soviet trade-unions and the Japanese concessionaires, it was given over to the people's court of the

Alexandrovski district, which ruled that the Japanese were to compensate the Russian workers and salaried employees for continuous "undersupplying" to the amount of 374,938 rubles. Under the terms of this ruling the Japanese were threatened with the loss of their concessions and property if the above-mentioned sum was not paid by July 19. Again the dispute took a serious turn. Togo protested again on July 16 against the oppression and persecution of the Japanese coal and oil companies. He accused the Soviet Government of making it impossible for the Japanese to continue their operations on Sakhalin and demanded a Soviet reply by July 18, a day before the expiration of the time limit set by the Soviet court for the payment of the damages. In reply to this protest the Acting Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs, S. Lozovsky, on the instructions of Molotov, informed the Japanese Ambassador that: "as this note contained threats and bore the character of an ultimatum the Commissariat did not consider it possible to receive the document and rejected it without examination."

This was followed by a longer note presented to the Japanese on July 24 which was couched in sharp terms and accused Tokyo of "a rude violation of Japanese obligations." Nevertheless the Soviet authorities did not carry out the restrictive measures against the Japanese concessionaires. Moreover, negotiations were soon begun between the trade-unions in question and the Japanese employers, which ended in an agreement of August 11, 1939, according to which wages were raised by 15 per cent, retroactive as of December 1, 1938. The Soviet authorities also granted the concessionaires the right to bring to Sakhalin 150 Japanese workers. Reporting this agreement Tass commented that it "demonstrates once again how baseless were the inventions of the Japanese newspapers when they claimed that the concessionaires were being obstructed in their work."

### 5. *Strained Relations between Tokyo and Berlin*

The Russo-German Pact struck the Japanese like a thunderbolt. It was immediately interpreted in Tokyo as a breach of faith on the part of Germany and a willful annulment of the Anti-Comintern Pact which had been signed for a term of five years. The Japanese Cabinet was forced to resign as a result. It is true that Von Ribbentrop, in an attempt to soften the blow, informed the Japanese Ambassador in Berlin that Germany had no intention of renouncing the Anti-Comintern Pact and that even though the Russo-German Treaty was concluded for a term of ten years it would remain in force only until the Polish and Danzig problems had been settled. He recommended that Japan, in turn, conclude a nonaggression pact with Russia for a limited period. However, Tokyo reacted negatively both to Germany's proposals and to her new policy. The Japanese government would not even consider a non-aggression pact with Russia. On August 31 the new Premier, Abe, reiterated that Japan would carry on her old policy "more vigorously than hitherto and even if she remains alone." However, he said, "It requires further study to decide whether the Anti-Comintern treaties are to be kept alive, or whether some better formula can be found to replace them." As to a Russo-Japanese rapprochement, the new Premier emphasized that before an improvement could take place in the relations between the two countries a number of questions would first have to be regulated and a number of conflicts settled.

Between the months of September, 1939, and June, 1940, Japanese policy with regard to the Soviets remained in principle unchanged. Tokyo kept on insisting that its primary objective was a victorious conclusion of the "China Incident," and this caused the strain in Russo-Japanese relations to continue. To be sure, certain attempts at a rapprochement were now being made by both sides. The Japanese Government, particularly its Kwantung Army, was forced to proceed somewhat more cautiously in its relations with the Soviet. Japan could no longer



count on German support, and renewed military conflicts with the Russians would threaten serious complications. It was imperative, therefore, for Tokyo to settle a number of questions with Moscow which, although minor, were a disturbing factor in their relationship.

The Soviet Government, on its part, would also have liked to establish more normal relations with Tokyo. Russia now had her hands full in Europe—with the problems of Eastern Poland, of the Baltic States, as well as of Finland and of the Balkans, which were soon to become basic in Soviet foreign policy—and she was anxious to assure more or less her security in the Far East.

Thus, although no radical change in the diplomatic relations of the two countries occurred until the middle of 1940, they now avoided military conflicts and even reached a number of agreements which put an end to some ancient grievances. By a special agreement of October 28, 1939, each side consented to release a number of the other's fishermen and fishing vessels which they had detained for several months. They formed a mixed commission for the delineation of the frontiers.\* Also, on December 31, 1939, they reached a compromise on the final payment by Manchukuo for the Chinese Eastern Railway whereby the Soviet agreed to acknowledge the Japanese counterclaims to the amount of 1,300,000 yen. These were actually paid one-third in cash and two-thirds in goods. This was preceded by the return to Tokyo in November of the Soviet Ambassador to Japan, Smetanin, after an absence of sixteen months. Finally in January, 1940, new negotiations for a trade agreement were started at Moscow. The statement, published on January 2, 1940, about the course of negotiations between Moscow and Tokyo on a number of disputed questions, also added to the impression that Japan was ready to recognize Outer Mongolia as within the Soviet sphere of influence, while Russia, in turn, was ready to drop any objections to the status of Manchukuo.

At the same time, however, on December 28, 1939, only a few days before the publication of this statement, General Abe made it clear that although a nonaggression agree-

\* A final settlement of the border wasn't reached until June 9, 1940.

ment with Russia was being examined, "the matter still belongs in the future. Even if the Soviets accept all the conditions that Japan might make we still have to consider carefully whether Japan will gain or lose by such an agreement."<sup>9</sup>

Even more blunt and threatening was the statement of the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hachiro Arita, made before the Diet on January 31, 1940:

We will continue our policy of close relationship with all Powers who are signatories of the Anti-Comintern Pact . . . Russia should cease interfering in the industrial concessions of North Sakhalin, modify her policy of supporting the anti-Japanese regime in China and collaborate for the realization of general peace in Eastern Asia.<sup>10</sup>

In reply to a question from a Diet member Arita also stated that even though German interest in the Anti-Comintern Pact had somewhat weakened, Italy, Spain, Hungary, and Manchukuo continued to adhere to it; hence it would be wrong to say that it no longer existed.<sup>11</sup>

On March 22 he said again: "The Anti-Comintern Pact continues to exist and its member States are expected to take measures against the Comintern's destructive operations."<sup>12</sup>

Neither did the Soviet Government, particularly its press, lag far behind in this campaign of hostile innuendoes. In spite of the partial agreements Russia now had with Japan, the tone of the Russian press was far from friendly. Now that Germany had vanished as a topic of discussion, the various problems of Japan—the poor conditions under which her workers toiled, her war in China, and Japanese imperialism in general—began to occupy a prominent place in the Soviet press. Molotov indicated what the relations of Russia with Japan were in his speech before the Supreme Soviet of March 29, 1940, when he stated (less militantly and threateningly, to be sure, than he did ten months before) that "Japan must realize that the Soviet Union will not tolerate any violations of her interests. Only if this is understood can our relations with Japan develop satisfactorily."<sup>13</sup>

In the meantime the Kremlin continued to maintain friendly relations with China. Russia extended new credits to Chiang Kai-shek's government and on October, 1939, a Soviet military mission arrived in Chungking. Chiang Kai-shek, in turn, telegraphed to Stalin on his sixtieth birthday his gratitude "for your sympathetic attitude toward our resistance," to which Stalin replied: "I wish you complete victory over the enemies of China."

## CHAPTER IX

JUNE, 1940

### I *The Fall of France*

ON May 10 the German armies attacked Holland and Belgium and a few days later war was being waged on the soil of France. As the French Army suffered one defeat after another, the war entered a critical stage. In Moscow this turn of events caused alarm, then something akin to panic. The whole structure of Soviet foreign policy had been predicated upon a long-drawn-out, sanguinary war between Germany and the Western Powers. Now the Kremlin was confronted with the perilous prospect of being left alone, face to face with the mighty Reich.

In mid-May Moscow was still expecting strengthened resistance by France, a miraculous shift in the fortunes of war. The Soviet press, which had hitherto derided the military might of the Allies, began to speculate about France's recuperative powers, about her chances for reorganizing her forces and withstanding the German attack. The military experts of *Pravda* and *Izvestiya* expected an Allied counterattack. They assured the Russians that "mechanized divisions can decide only the first stage of the war, not its final outcome."<sup>1</sup> In June, when the fate of France was all but decided, the Moscow radio was still insisting that "the main armies of the Allies remain intact." High circles in the Kremlin believed that it might still be a long time before Germany became master of Europe.

Moscow was also convinced that, should the German Blitzkrieg prevail in France, Russia would be Hitler's next target. American reports from the Soviet capital told of the panic which gripped Moscow as a result of the unexpected collapse of France. "The Kremlin officials are shaking in their boots. They realize that a Germany

dominating all Europe would have Russia at her mercy.''<sup>2</sup> The pro-Soviet French newspaper, *Ceuvre*, now insisted that Hitler "planned to finish France by July 1 and then settle accounts with Stalin." The Kremlin's confusion was so great that in the historic month of June, 1940, not a single leading article on the war appeared in either *Pravda* or *Izvestiya*.

The Soviet people were completely unaware of the seriousness of the situation, and life in the cities and towns of Russia followed its normal course. The leaders, however, exaggerated the danger. They expected a German blow in 1940.

There is hardly any doubt but that, soon after the French catastrophe, namely, in August, 1940, an attack upon Russia was seriously contemplated by the German Government. In the second half of June operations in France were over and the next move was then the order of the day. England was extremely weak; her aviation presented no danger to the Reich.

Having occupied the Baltic States in June, 1940, Russia stationed an army of 22 divisions on the Lithuanian-German border, and forced Hitler, as he acknowledged later, to hold in the East a considerable part of his Air Force "which was needed for the decision in the West." On the other hand, Russia was still licking the wounds of her Finnish campaign, and conditions, so it seemed, were favorable for an immediate attack in the East.\* Nevertheless, tempting though it was, Hitler decided against an immediate Russian campaign. To shift the huge German Army from France to the Soviet borders would have taken over two months, and the attack could have begun only in October, when the rigorous Russian winter was not far off. Even though general opinion of Soviet military prowess was at a low ebb, Hitler was taking no chances.

Equally important, the anti-Russian coalition, which was to aid Germany in an attack upon the Soviets, was only in a formative stage. Hungary and Rumania still clung to an illusion of independence. But the most impor-

\* "From August, 1940, I considered it to be in the interest of the Reich no longer to permit our Eastern provinces to remain unprotected" (Hitler, June 22, 1941)

tant factor in the calculations of the German High Command was the Balkans. Greece and Turkey, remaining independent of the Axis, could serve as landing bases for British forces and England would thus be enabled to effect a junction with the Russians.

Hitler set aside the idea of a Russian campaign for 1940. It would still require a number of months of diplomatic and military preparation before such a campaign would be possible.

Having decided against a Russian campaign in 1940, the Wilhelmstrasse found no difficulty in continuing its established policy toward Moscow, a policy gilded with protestations of everlasting friendship and declarations of purely peaceful intentions. Moscow knew the full value of these declarations. It had no illusions as to Berlin's real aims. Stalin could now follow one of two courses: attack Germany while part of her army was still in France, or keep up the bluff of benevolent neutrality. The first of these alternatives would have run counter to the principles and prejudices which formed the core of Moscow's foreign policy. The considerations which had prompted Moscow to seek an understanding with Berlin in August, 1939, now, after the collapse of France, seemed still more convincing. As before, an alliance with England was deemed neither possible nor desirable by the Kremlin. Moscow therefore decided to continue its waiting policy.

In the meantime the Soviets made feverish preparations for war. This preparation extended to the fields of diplomacy, economics, and military measures, and filled the entire second half of 1940. Immediately after the German occupation of Paris a new phase of intensive Russian diplomatic activity set in, comparable to that of the second half of September, 1939. Between June 15 and 30, 1940, the Soviet Government

(1) Occupied completely the Baltic States—Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—and concentrated large forces on the German frontier;

(2) Occupied the Rumanian provinces of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina;

- (3) Demanded from Finland the demilitarization of the Aland Islands;
- (4) Established diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia;
- (5) Mobilized the Russian economy for war—the working day was considerably lengthened and severe disciplinary measures were introduced in all Soviet industries;
- (6) Accelerated the reorganization of the Red Army; this had been begun soon after the close of the Finnish War and was now pushed through at forced speed.

## 2. *Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina*

Before Italy entered the war on June 10, 1940, an agreement, verbal or written, had undoubtedly been reached among Russia, Germany, and Italy regarding the maintenance of the status quo in the Balkans. Postponing for the moment their plans in Southeastern Europe, each of these countries kept a watchful eye on the other, but each was ready to take the fatal step in the Balkans in order to beat its competitor.

Flushed with victory in the West, Berlin decided to pursue in the Balkans her policy of "indirect aggression." Germany forced Bucharest to liquidate all British interests in Rumania, particularly in the vital oil industry. Germany and Italy even had their own puppet candidates for the post of Premier of Yugoslavia: the former preferred Milan Stoyadinovich, while the latter pushed the candidacy of Ante Pavelich, the notorious Croat terrorist, who had organized the assassination of King Alexander of Yugoslavia, and who was subsequently to become the Premier of Italy's puppet kingdom of Croatia.

Rumania was in a special category. The Little Entente no longer existed, while the Anglo-French guarantee was now a mere scrap of paper. But unlike Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, she could not turn to Russia for help, since the Soviets presented the greatest danger to her territorial integrity. Finding little support among her neighbors, Bucharest was forced by the iron logic of events into the arms of Germany. This was indeed a political incongruity since the Kingdom of Rumania, as it was formed in 1919,

was composed of many territories which had been taken away from Germany's allies in the last war. The truth was that Rumania came to Germany's arms reluctantly and for many months forcefully resisted complete domination by Germany.

At the end of April Bucharest had concluded an agreement with Berlin by which Germany promised to furnish a hundred airplanes and a considerable quantity of arms produced by the Czechoslovak Skoda works. This was followed by a mobilization of Rumania's armed forces in May, an act directed primarily against Russia. On June 1 the Wilhelmstrasse finally succeeded in forcing the Rumanian Government to dismiss Gafencu, Minister of Foreign Affairs, regarded as an exponent of the traditional policy of collaboration with the Anglo-French bloc, and to appoint in his place the pro-German Ion Gigurtu. By the end of June Germany was complete master of Rumania. On June 20 the Rumanian press published sharp attacks upon France, Rumania's traditional ally, and these were soon followed by typical denunciations of Jews, Marxists, and so forth. On June 21 King Carol issued a decree banning all political parties in Rumania. All power was transferred to the Iron Guard. Members of the Iron Guard organization who had fled to Germany to escape persecution now returned to Rumania, and its leader, Professor Sima, was at once received by Carol. On June 22 all radio broadcasts were interrupted, and the King went in person to the microphone to announce the change in the government. The Foreign Minister, Gigurtu, at first attempted to maneuver between the Anglo-French bloc and Germany. In the middle of June, however, after the defeat of France, his policies became openly pro-German, and he was elevated by Carol to the Premiership. Thus after June Germany could also count Rumania among her bloodless conquests.

The new Soviet Minister, Lavrentiev,\* who had arrived in Bucharest at this time, was the first "victim" of the new situation. Twice he had asked to be received by the

\* The post of Soviet Minister to Rumania had been vacant since February, 1938, when the former Minister, Butenko, in fear of being purged, escaped to Italy



King, but each time his visit was postponed. The speed with which the Rumanian Government had executed the internal changes was undoubtedly designed to stiffen Hitler's attitude toward Russia.

Moscow now believed that within a few days at most it would be too late to solve the Bessarabian problem without a war. If at that moment German troops had entered Rumania and drawn near the Soviet borders, as actually happened at a later date, it would have meant that Russia could annex Bessarabia only by going to war with Germany. On June 24, therefore, Molotov informed the German Government that Russia had decided on the immediate annexation not only of Bessarabia but also of Northern Bukovina. Count von der Schulenburg was at once instructed to inform the Soviet Government that its "decision has come as a complete surprise to the German Government, and it would seriously affect Germany's economic interests in Rumania and lead to the disruption of the life of a large German settlement in Bessarabia as well as of the German elements in Bukovina."<sup>3</sup>

In reply Molotov informed the German Government that the U. S. S. R. regarded its demand as one of great urgency, and demanded an answer within twenty-four hours. In the meantime several Red Army divisions under the command of Marshal Semion Timoshenko were concentrated at the Rumanian border, ready to move into Bessarabia at a moment's notice.

Berlin decided to yield, and the Rumanian Government was urged to do likewise. According to the German Minister in Bucharest, Berlin regarded this as merely a "temporary adjustment," the Rumanian Government having been told that "Germany would settle things later."<sup>4</sup>

On June 26 Molotov handed the Rumanian Minister in Moscow a long note in which he reminded the Rumanian Government that the Soviet Government had

never acquiesced in the separation of the Bessarabian territory—a territory populated mostly by Ukrainians—from the U. S. S. R. Therefore, the Government of the U. S. S. R. regards it as necessary and timely and in the interest of justice to begin with Rumania immediate negotiations regarding the return of

Bessarabia to the Soviet Union. This question [said the note] is organically linked with the question of transferring to the Soviet Union the part of Bukovina which, in the composition of population, is historically and linguistically bound up with the Soviet Ukraine. Such an act would compensate—only to a small degree, of course—for the great wrong done to the Soviet Union and to the population of Bessarabia by the twenty-two years of Rumanian domination of Bessarabia. The transfer of these territories to the Soviet Union would thus be an act of justice.

An undisguised ultimatum, this note gave the Rumanian Government little time for reflection. It was handed to the Rumanian Minister in Moscow on June 26 at ten o'clock at night, with a demand that a reply be given not later than June 27. This short notice reflected the haste with which the Soviet Government sought to solve the Bessarabian question. Bucharest replied early on June 27 with a vague and evasive note: ". . . the Royal Government is ready to enter into an immediate friendly and broad discussion of all the proposals set forth by the Soviet Government." The Bucharest Government asked the Soviets to designate the time and place for such a discussion.

According to Moscow's official version of this diplomatic exchange, Molotov, upon receiving the Rumanian reply, asked the Rumanian Minister, Davidescu, whether his government accepted the Soviet demands, and the latter replied in the "affirmative."\* Therefore the Soviet Government, completely ignoring Rumania's evasive reply, informed Bucharest that, on the basis of Davidescu's verbal agreement, it regarded the question of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina as settled. It now demanded that Rumania evacuate Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina within four days, beginning June 28 at 2 p.m. By June 28 the principal cities of Kishinev (Chizenu), Cernauti (Czernowitz), and Akkerman (Cetatea Alba) were to be completely free of Rumanian troops. The Kremlin also demanded a Rumanian guarantee that in the process of evacuation no damage would be done to railroads, parks, air-

\* In his speech of June 22, 1941, Hitler stated "I advised acquiescence in the Soviet Russian demands—the cession of Bessarabia."

dromes, telegraph installations, and so forth. The Rumanian Government was requested to reply to this note not later than noon of the following day.

In the meantime Bucharest was in frantic consultation, not only with Berlin but also with other "friendly powers." When the Crown Council finally met to discuss the Soviet demands, it was decided by twenty-seven votes to eleven to bow to the Soviet ultimatum.\*

On June 28, at eleven o'clock—an hour before the second Soviet ultimatum expired—Davidescu informed the Soviet Government that in the interest of avoiding war Rumania accepted the Soviet demands. He merely asked for an extension of time in which to carry out the evacuation of the ceded territory. Molotov informed the Rumanian Envoy that a special Soviet-Rumanian commission would sit at Odessa to deal with all problems connected with the transfer of the territories. As to the extension of time, the most to which the Soviet Government could agree was a "few hours." But three hours later—on June 28 at two in the afternoon—Soviet troops were crossing the Rumanian border.

The movement of Soviet troops into Bessarabia and Bukovina was executed with unusual speed and by unusual methods, considering that these territories had been ceded by agreement and not as a result of war. Airplanes dropped parachutists and small tanks<sup>5</sup> over the territory ceded, as a symbol of Soviet occupation, and these were soon followed by infantry paced by large tanks. Within two days the Soviet forces had reached the western boundaries of Bessarabia and Bukovina, and the occupation was a *fait accompli*.

On the day following Russia's occupation of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina a number of large German bombers landed at the Rumanian air base of Brasov (Kronstadt). Officially, these bombers had been ordered from German factories by Rumania many months previously, but the moment chosen for their delivery was obviously a threat

\* The Rumanian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Constantine Argetoianu, told the Parliamentary Commission for Foreign Affairs on July 2. "Rumania was advised by all her friends to submit to the Soviet ultimatum in order not to start a war in this part of Europe "

to Russia, a warning to the Kremlin to desist from further expansion.

Triumphantly announcing the annexation of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, the Soviet press described the rapturous joy with which the Red Army was welcomed by the local population. Everywhere, so Soviet correspondents reported, "our forces were greeted with prolonged and warm ovations." The Rumanian press, on the other hand, reported that the local population was in mortal fear of Soviet terrorism and of the new economic changes which the Soviet Government would institute in the occupied territories

Simultaneously with the Soviet occupation of these territories, there began a shifting of the native population in both directions. Masses of Rumanian citizens who were in one way or another linked to Bessarabia, particularly Jews, Communist officials, and others, moved to the Soviet-occupied territories. Within one month, that is, before the end of July, more than 150,000 persons left Rumania proper for Bessarabia. On the other hand, within one week about 200,000 refugees from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina crossed the border into Rumania. In addition, 80,000 Germans were evacuated from Bessarabia and about 30,000 from Northern Bukovina.<sup>6</sup>

While the German press welcomed the return of Bessarabia to Soviet Russia, Berlin intensified its internal activities in Rumania. By the end of July all British and French rights in Rumanian oil had been practically annulled, and a break in diplomatic relations between Bucharest and the Allies had become imminent. On July 1, under German pressure, Rumania officially denounced the Anglo-French guarantee of her borders of April 13, 1939. As a step preliminary to a complete break, twenty-six British oil-field engineers were unceremoniously expelled from Rumania. The Bucharest Government announced bluntly on July 4: "Henceforth Rumanian foreign policy will be guided by the policies of the Rome-Berlin Axis."

Bessarabia is a large region lying between the rivers Prut and Dniester; it has a territory of 17,146 square miles and a population of 3,200,000. It was first annexed by Rus-

sia from Turkey in 1812, by the Treaty of Bucharest, and for more than a hundred years was part of the Russian Empire. When the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia, the territory at first proclaimed its autonomy; then in the early part of 1918 it was annexed by Rumania. On March 5, 1918, the Soviet Government concluded an agreement with Bucharest according to which Rumanian troops were to leave Bessarabia within two months. However, three weeks later the so-called Bessarabian regional council, the Sfatul-Tării, mostly influenced by the presence of strong Rumanian forces, decided to unite Bessarabia with the Kingdom of Rumania. At that time Soviet Russia was too weak to contest this decision. However, it never recognized Rumania's right to Bessarabia, and for more than two decades this territory was the main bone of contention between the two countries.

As to the ethnic composition of the population of these territories, according to the Russian census of 1897, 48 per cent of the inhabitants were Rumanians and 28 per cent Russians and Ukrainians. In 1930 the Rumanian authorities took another census which showed that 56 per cent of the inhabitants were Rumanian and only 23 per cent Russian and Ukrainian.<sup>7</sup> (The results of this census were obviously colored.) Jews made up 12 per cent of the Bessarabian population; the Jewish question had always played an important role in Bessarabia, both under Czarism and under Rumanian rule. Bessarabia had been the stronghold of the anti-Semitic movement at the beginning of this century, the first pogrom of Jews which horrified the entire civilized world, occurred in Kishinev in 1903.

Northern Bukovina, a territory of about 2,300 square miles with a population of 500,000, had never belonged to the Russian Empire. However, the area was entirely too small to possess any significance other than strategic. The majority of the population consists of Ukrainians and the economic structure is chiefly agrarian, like the neighboring provinces of Podolia, Bessarabia, and Galicia.

In these annexations the Soviet Government made no attempt to disguise its plans. It spoke openly of "liberating the people from the capitalist yoke" and one week after

the occupation the Council of the People's Commissars of the U. S. S. R. decided to include Bessarabia in the Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Republic, a constituent member of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. This was given more concrete form by a decision of the Supreme Soviet of the U. S. S. R. of August 2 to include in the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic most of the districts of the Bessarabian territory, particularly those with predominantly Moldavian population. At the same time the chiefly Ukrainian districts of Bessarabia (Khotin, Akkerman, and Izmail) as well as Northern Bukovina were attached to the Ukrainian S. S. R. As a result of this reform the Moldavian Republic now had a population of 2,200,000, of whom 70 per cent were Moldavians. The Republic was detached from the Ukrainian Republic and made a full-fledged member—the thirteenth—of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The remaining districts of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina were included in the Ukrainian Republic. Finally, on August 15 a decree was issued nationalizing all land, banks, industries, and trading enterprises, both in Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina.

### 3 *Russia Incorporates the Baltic States*

The political situation of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania was indeed anomalous following the conclusion of their mutual assistance pacts with Moscow in October, 1939. The Red Army detachments which, as a result of these pacts, had been stationed in the Baltic constituted a strong force—about 90,000 men.\* Yet the regimes of the three Baltic States remained intact. They continued to pursue policies independent of the Kremlin, particularly in internal affairs. Their social structure remained unchanged. Only in public speeches was there now more frequent reference to the needs of labor, to the vital importance of improving the social and economic conditions of the workers. Even so-called dictators, like Ulmanis of Latvia, who was hated in Moscow for his severe measures of repression

\* According to the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* of June 17, 1940, there were 30,000 Red Army men stationed in Lithuania, 40,000 in Latvia, and 20,000 in Estonia.

against Communists, remained at the helm of the government while Communists languished in jail.

This attempt at military occupation without political interference in the internal affairs of the occupied country could not have lasted very long. The Red Army forces of occupation were kept strictly isolated from the local Baltic population. All contact between them, even conversation in the street, was forbidden. In Latvia people were on occasion punished for speaking to Red Army men in the street, while in Lithuania Red Army commanders reported to the authorities a forthcoming First of May festival which was being organized by Lithuanian Communists and of which the Russians had learned in advance.<sup>8</sup>

Anti-Soviet sentiment, which had been rather widespread in the Baltic, had not diminished. There was universal expectation and widespread fear of complete sovietization. Here and there threads were being spun toward Berlin. President Smetona of Lithuania told the new British Envoy, Preston, on June 12 that Lithuania would prefer German to Russian occupation. The president of the Kaunas court put the matter quite bluntly. "If the Germans should come, they will destroy the Lithuanian nation, but will leave us our homes and property; the Soviets will leave the Lithuanian nation intact, but will confiscate our homes and property. I prefer the former."<sup>9</sup>

Distrust, suspicion, fear increased with every month on both sides. Incidents multiplied. When, for instance, the Lithuanian Government was slow in transferring its capital from Kaunas to Vilna, the Soviet Minister insisted that it be done at once. "Why," he asked, "do you not transfer your capital? Is it because you do not trust the Soviet Government?" Indeed, "the slightest thing which happened to disturb the Soviets was immediately construed by them as proof of the insincerity of the Baltic States."<sup>10</sup>

At the very moment when decisive military events were occurring in the West, Russia began strengthening her military forces on the Baltic-German borders—on the border of Lithuania and the shores of the Baltic Sea. However, in the Baltic Russia proceeded more cautiously than

she did elsewhere, for instance, in Bessarabia. As if groping her way she tested each step by the reaction it produced. Not until a month and a half after the Kremlin had begun to revamp its relations with Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania was it ready to incorporate these states completely into the Soviet Union.

On June 15, 1940, Molotov received the German Ambassador, Count von der Schulenburg and, congratulating him on the entrance of German troops into Paris the previous day, also took occasion to inform him that Soviet Russia had sent considerable military forces into the Baltic States. This was indeed killing two birds with one stone. It expressed Russia's reaction toward Germany's victories; it was also an eloquent reminder that Russia was aware of Germany's inability at the moment to prevent Russia's expansion in the Baltic. It was now clear to Moscow that the complete absorption of the Baltic States, which had been hitherto regarded as a dangerous move, would no longer be opposed by a Germany which had her hands full in the West.

A few days later Moscow and Berlin, as described above, opened negotiations over the Bessarabian question, in the course of which other pressing problems, such as the Baltic question, were touched upon.

It stood to reason that now that almost all Germans had been evacuated from Estonia and Latvia, and the Soviets had massed great military forces on the borders of these states, Berlin could not have opposed the Soviet move effectively. Under these circumstances, the German press passed over Soviet-Lithuanian events in complete silence, and the *Auswärtiges Amt* even stated on June 16 that "these events do not concern us."<sup>11</sup> Three days later Berlin officially denied rumors of a large concentration of German troops on the Lithuanian border.<sup>12</sup> At the same time Moscow found it expedient to deny persistent rumors which were making the rounds of the world's capitals to the effect that the Soviets had large Red Army concentrations on the German border. However, the text of Moscow's denial, its arguments, conclusions, and facts are of historic interest:



Rumors are being persistently circulated that about a hundred to a hundred and fifty divisions [i.e., 1,500,000 to 2,500,000 Red Army men] are concentrated on the Lithuanian-German border; that this concentration of troops has been called forth by the apprehension of the Soviet Union at German gains in the West, and that this reflects strained Russo-German relations, an attempt to exert pressure upon Germany. Tass is authorized to state that all these rumors have no basis of fact. No more than eighteen to twenty Soviet divisions are stationed in the Baltic, and these divisions are not on the borders but in various interior districts. They are there not to exert pressure upon Germany but to guarantee the fulfillment of the mutual assistance pacts concluded between the U. S. S. R. and these countries.

. . . Rumors and propaganda will not be able to undermine the good-neighborly relations between the U. S. S. R. and Germany.

Berlin replied to this communiqué with a polite declaration that "all attempts to sow dissatisfaction between the two great powers are doomed to failure."<sup>13</sup>

These cordial declarations, as was often the case in Russo-German relations of this period, were merely efforts to cover up the intense struggle that was going on behind the scenes. At the very moment, for instance, that Berlin and Moscow were professing their undying friendship, it became known that the remaining Germans in the Baltic—35,000 of them in Lithuania alone—were to be evacuated to Germany. As to the number of Soviet troops mentioned in the Tass communiqué, military experts were inclined to believe that this figure was true to fact. However, large Red Army forces were also stationed along the Polish frontier, and it was estimated that about half a million men were spread out along the rest of the Russo-German borders.<sup>14</sup>

After some further negotiations Germany dropped her opposition to Russia's annexation of the Baltic States. Moscow then published an official Berlin statement to the effect that "informed political sources declare that the incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union does not in any way affect Germany's interests, while Italian political circles state that these events are occurring in an

area in which Italy has no interest."<sup>15</sup> In his speech of July 17, 1940, Hitler subsequently declared that "Soviet Russia had never expanded beyond the limits of her sphere of interests as determined by both countries." But the diplomatic representatives of the three Baltic States in the various capitals of Europe and America protested against the Soviet action and urged the governments to which they were accredited not to recognize the absorption of their countries by Russia. In some capitals they refused to transfer their legation buildings and archives to the Soviet representatives. Russia, on the other hand, acted speedily. By August all governments had received from Moscow requests to close their legations and consulates in the Baltic States within two weeks.

The question of Baltic independence played a prominent role in the history of the war, both prior to the outbreak of Russo-German hostilities and in part after Germany's attack on Russia. In the Axis countries Russia's action was recognized as legitimate; all protests of the Baltic diplomatic representatives were rejected. But such was not the case in the neutral countries, and more particularly in the United States and in Great Britain.

The Baltic crisis confronted Downing Street with a new dilemma. Despite Churchill's desire to seek a rapprochement with Moscow, he could not pass over in silence the absorption of the three Baltic States. A long and tortuous conflict arose between Moscow and London. The British Government froze all funds belonging to the Baltic States; the three countries had about \$15,000,000 to \$20,000,000 in American and British banks, a sum sufficient to reimburse their creditors. Ambassador Maisky protested. Vessels flying the flags of the Baltic States were not permitted to leave port, and several hundred Baltic seamen were detained in England. About this, too, there were long negotiations between Molotov and Sir Stafford Cripps in Moscow. The consensus of opinion in London was that "Halifax was confronted with a very delicate situation."<sup>16</sup>

Washington, which as usual took a more firm position than did London in questions of this sort, reacted even

more sharply to Russia's acts in the Baltic. On July 24 the State Department released an official declaration, stating that

the people of the United States are opposed to predatory activities no matter whether they are carried on by the use of force or by the threat of force. They are likewise opposed to any form of intervention on the part of one state, however powerful, in the domestic concerns of any other sovereign state, however weak.

Washington continued to recognize the accredited diplomatic representatives of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. The State Department also coupled the recall of the United States diplomats from Kaunas, Riga, and Tallinn with a vigorous protest to Moscow.

#### 4. *Social Reconstruction in the Baltic States*

Every occupation of new territories by Soviet Russia was accompanied by deep social changes differing widely, however, from the already obsolete pattern of social revolutions. In the course of nine months—from September 17, 1939, to the end of June, 1940—the Soviet Government undertook such transformations no less than seven times.

When, in September, 1939, the Red Army occupied vast stretches of Eastern Poland, the military forces were followed by government officials armed with instructions to put into effect the socialization of those regions. Next came the turn of the small regions ceded by Finland to the Soviet Union. Three months later a social transformation took place in the three Baltic States, again closely following the military occupation. And finally came the turn of Bessarabia and of Northern Bukovina.

The population of all these countries amounted to approximately 23,000,000—it was equal to that of contemporary Spain, more than half of today's France.

"The capitalist world will have to shrink," said Molotov. In the early days of the Soviet regime Bukharin, in his *ABC of Communism*, had presented a universal scheme of world revolution. It was based on the Soviet experiment and included, as a general tenet, the "tearing up of the

social fabric"—uprisings, street demonstrations, seizure of factories by the workers, and civil war. Later, when the danger of a new world war first began to appear, this pattern for social revolution was still considered valid.

Events, however, took a different turn. In the 1930's it became obvious that the tide of revolution in Europe had come to an end and at the same time the might of the only Soviet State had grown considerably. Now Soviet Russia assumed, in the Communist creed, the role of an instigator, of a pioneer. To liberate the "oppressed peoples" became the function of a *state*, not of the *revolutionary party*.

Thus, in 1939-40 socialization was carried out along new lines which were different from the classical concept of revolution. In the newly occupied countries industrial plants were not seized by the workers, on the contrary, the new regime ruthlessly suppressed all attempts of this kind. A complete scheme of "socialization of society" had been prepared beforehand and was systematically put into effect by the new authorities. Ties were established between industrial centers in Moscow and the corresponding factories in the newly acquired territories. Special instructions were issued concerning political reprisals against anyone guilty of offering opposition.

This method of implanting Communism made itself particularly evident in the Soviet occupation of the Baltic States in the summer of 1940.

Soviet policy in the Baltic was carried through in three steps. At the beginning of June Moscow decided to station a big military force in the Baltic with the aid of the existing governments. In mid-June these governments were shelved and replaced by "truly democratic" regimes subservient to Moscow, while the independence of the Baltic States was as yet left intact. At the end of June Moscow decided to take the final step of incorporating Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania into the Soviet Union.

On May 28, 1940, the Soviet Government had sent a note to Kaunas complaining about the mysterious disappearance of a number of Red Army men from a tank brigade stationed in Lithuania. In this rather lengthy note Molo-

tov cited a number of strange facts. One Red Army man, a tank driver, it stated, had been kidnaped on May 18 and held in a cellar without food for several days. His captors demanded, under threat of death, that he supply them with information regarding his brigade. Whether the Red Army man submitted to the threats was not known, but a week later he was taken blindfolded to the outskirts of the city and turned loose. Soon afterward a second tank driver was kidnaped by six men; this time they threw a sack over his head and kept him for three days in a cellar without bread or water. He, too, was threatened with death to force him to reveal secrets of his brigade, but he refused to submit and finally managed to escape. Another Red Army man disappeared, and it took three months to find his body. Lithuanian authorities pronounced him a suicide, alleging that he had shot himself through the mouth. Molotov's note, however, maintained that he was not a suicide and that he had been shot through the chest.

In this connection it should be noted that tiny Lithuania, sandwiched in as she was between Russia and Germany, was a happy hunting ground for international spies and was teeming with British, German, French, and other agents. Even Japan opened a consulate in Kaunas.

Molotov's note, as yet unaccompanied by any specific demands, brought consternation to Lithuanian ranks. Kaunas seethed with rumors. Some people said that the kidnaping of the Russian soldiers was the work of former Polish officers in disguise, who were thus avenging Russia's invasion of Eastern Poland; others that the crime had been perpetrated by German agents, although its execution would seem entirely too amateurish for such old hands at the game as the German military intelligence. There was talk of a secret "fifth column," known as the "Black Hand," whose primary purpose, it was said, was to cause friction between Russia and Lithuania. Some even insisted that the author of the attacks was none other than the Soviet G. P. U., which had been entrusted with certain military tasks on Lithuanian soil. However, the Kaunas government's suggestion that a mixed commission be

formed to investigate the incidents was rejected in Moscow; Kaunas believed that no kidnaping had occurred.

In reply to Molotov the Lithuanian Government stated that it had already furnished Moscow with an explanation of these unfortunate incidents, but that it would soon be ready to supply more information as a special commission was being appointed to investigate these crimes; it added that "all those found guilty will be severely punished." In the meantime sixty-four persons were arrested in Vilna, and many Lithuanian citizens were evacuated from the districts in which the Soviet tank brigades were stationed. However, the Soviet Government was not satisfied, and the Lithuanian Premier, Merkis, left for Moscow to settle the matter in person.

Almost simultaneously with its note to Kaunas, Moscow began new negotiations with Latvia. The visit of Premier Merkis to the Soviet capital was preceded by that of the Minister of War and Commander in Chief of Latvia, General Berkis, accompanied by a military mission. General Berkis was received warmly by Moscow. He was dined and wined by Molotov, by Marshal Timoshenko, and by other Soviet military dignitaries. He was taken for inspection visits to Soviet factories, collective farms, canals, and so forth. The real purpose of his visit was military. Like the Lithuanian Premier, he had been summoned to discuss the transfer of a large Soviet Army to Baltic territory, and of units of the Red fleet to Baltic waters.

The truth was that Moscow attributed little importance to the minor incidents which had occurred in Lithuania. On his return to Kaunas on June 12 Merkis was able to state that he was fully satisfied with the results of his trip; that relations between Russia and Lithuania would continue to be governed by the Mutual Assistance Treaty between the two countries. To avoid future incidents the Lithuanian Government had decided to set up a special bureau to take care of Red Army men.

At this time Moscow was not yet ready to incorporate the Baltic States into the U. S. S. R. Soon, however, the situation had changed drastically in France, and it was decided in Moscow to present an ultimatum to Lithuania,

to be followed shortly by similar ultimatums to Latvia and Estonia. These ultimatums represented one more step toward liquidating the Baltic States but not the final step.

On June 14 Premier Merkis and the Lithuanian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Urbshis, who had been summoned to Moscow, were handed a Soviet note; referring once more to the Red Army men who had been kidnaped, the note likewise protested against the arrest of a number of Lithuanian citizens employed by the Red Army detachments. These acts, the note stated, were obviously committed for the purpose of

making it impossible for the Soviet military forces to remain in Lithuania, to foster hostility toward the Soviet military employees, and to instigate excesses against the Red Army forces. All these facts indicate clearly that the Lithuanian Government is violating its mutual assistance agreement with Soviet Russia and is preparing an attack upon the Soviet garrisons situated in Lithuania.

The Lithuanian Government was also accused of entering into a military alliance with Latvia and Estonia—the so-called “Baltic Entente”—obviously directed against the Soviet Union. Under the circumstances, concluded Molotov’s note, the Soviet Government regards the following measures, to be carried out at once, as imperative:

1. To bring to trial the Minister of Internal Affairs, Skuchas, and the chief of the political police, Povelaites.
2. To form a new government able to carry out the Mutual Assistance Pact.
3. To agree to the stationing of Soviet troops in the most important centers of the country, the force to be large enough to assure the fulfillment of the agreements entered into by the two countries.

The demand for a new government was first mentioned in this note. What Moscow meant was a government approved by the Kremlin and subservient to it. The note was in the form of an ultimatum with a very short time limit; a reply was demanded by the following morning at ten. Kaunas, panic-stricken, was only too ready to comply. At

nine in the morning, a full hour before the expiration of the time limit, Foreign Minister Urbshis informed Molotov of Lithuania's acceptance of the Soviet terms. In accordance with Moscow's demand, the Kaunas government resigned. At three in the afternoon of that very day Soviet tanks were rolling across the Lithuanian border and entering Kaunas, Vilna, and other cities in large numbers.

For several days Lithuania was without a government. In Kaunas a struggle developed around the formation of the new Cabinet, and Moscow sent the Assistant Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Dekanozov, to take matters in hand. In the meantime President Smetona and a number of other high officials had fled to Germany, where they were interned. Finally, on June 17 the new Cabinet was formed and approved by Moscow. The former Minister of Internal Affairs and the former chief of the Lithuanian political police were arrested. More than a hundred political prisoners, mostly Communists, were released from the Kaunas prison. Soon afterward Communist prisoners were also released from all provincial jails.

Lithuania was like a country in the midst of a minor revolution. Propertied elements were panicky, even though the new government, headed by Premier Ustas Palaetskis, was democratic not Communist in character. But groups of Communists filled the streets and cheered the newly arrived Soviet detachments.

Two days after these events in Lithuania, the turn of Latvia and Estonia came. On June 16 Molotov delivered identical ultimatums to the Estonian and Latvian Envoys in Moscow. Referring to the Latvian-Estonian agreement of 1923 as in essence a "military alliance," the Soviet Foreign Commissar informed Riga and Tallinn that

the Soviet Government has established beyond doubt [partly on the basis of information supplied by the Lithuanian Premier Merkis!] that the Latvian-Estonian alliance was not dissolved after these countries concluded their pacts with the Soviet Union; that, on the contrary, they seek to expand it by the inclusion of Lithuania and Finland. The Soviet Government can neither permit nor tolerate such an alliance; it regards it as dangerous and as a threat to the frontiers of the U. S. S. R.



Molotov also insisted that two secret conferences of this alliance had been held in December, 1939, and in March, 1940, to cement the ties among the parties to this "Baltic Entente" and to establish contact between their general staffs. Finally the Soviet Government put forward the following demands, to be accepted immediately:

1. The formation of new Latvian and Estonian Governments;

2. Free access for Soviet troops to Latvia and Estonia.

As had happened in the case of Lithuania, both countries complied at once. On the very same day Riga and Tallinn informed Molotov of their acceptance of Russia's terms. In the meantime strong Soviet forces were already crossing their borders. In these countries, too, the well-to-do classes were in a panic. Bank deposits were being withdrawn and the stores were jammed with people buying up food, clothing, and all other articles they could lay their hands on. On the other hand the pro-Soviet elements welcomed the Russians with ovations and proceeded to smash the windows of police stations. In Riga an attempt was made to storm the prefecture of police, while in Tallinn the principal government building was seized by a group of rebels who hoisted a red flag with hammer and sickle over it.

In Estonia too not a single Communist was included in the new Cabinet. Most of its members were Socialists, with Johannes Vares as Premier. General Laidonner, who had been Commander in Chief of the Estonian Army for many years, resigned his post. Constantine Paets, however, remained as President.

The radical political changes which had occurred in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia on Moscow's initiative and with the fervent support of the native Communists resulted in the rise of a social movement—limited, but nevertheless significant—inspired by a radically Communist ideology. Yet, so far from rejoicing, the Kremlin was greatly irritated at this development. Not only were these movements restrained and persecuted by the local police in Riga and Tallinn, but even the Red Army banned noisy ovations, which at times tended to turn into abortive re-

volts on the part of Communist elements. The commanders of the Red Army demanded of the Tallinn authorities that they suppress disorders. In Riga the police were ordered to shoot at unruly demonstrators.<sup>17</sup> Viewed historically, this was an inevitable conflict between a sedate, smug, orderly Communist state and the inexperienced, zealous, and naïve Communist elements. Here and there workers began to seize factories, emulating the example of the revolutionary Russian workers of 1917-18, but the government proclaimed severe penalties for "willful nationalization."<sup>18</sup> Another important reason for these severe measures lay, of course, in the fact that Moscow could not countenance chaos on the very borders of Germany, when everything was being staked on the defense of these frontiers against sudden German attack. The disorders were short-lived and were suppressed without much effort.

The three new Baltic Governments acted in concert, issued identical declarations, and held fresh elections on the same day. Their actions were directed by one hand—the hand of the Kremlin—which sought to reorganize them speedily and to unify the work of the three governments. Actually the Baltic States were now ruled by three high Soviet officials: Estonia by Zhdanov, Lithuania by Dekanozov, and Latvia by Andrei Vyshinsky. The Premiers of the new Baltic Governments were entirely subordinate to them.

Immediately upon being formed these governments made public simultaneously their programs of action, the main point of which was "collaboration with the Soviet Union." They also announced the dissolution of the old parliaments, new elections, "amnesties for the imprisoned fighters for liberty," universal democratic rights for their citizens, and far-reaching measures for the improvement of the economic and social conditions of the people. On the face of it, these were programs of democratic regimes striving for a maximum of personal liberty, for improved social legislation, and above all for the preservation of peaceful relations with their neighbors. At the same time—and this was significant—they stressed their intention of "strengthening their state sovereignty." Apparently

Moscow had not yet decided by June 18-20 to take the final step in the Baltic. At the moment the Kremlin's objective was to form governments which would be willing to do its bidding.

The programs made no mention of socialism, of the organization of workers' soviets, and so forth. Not a single official member of the Communist party was included in either of the Cabinets. As yet there was no question of either sovietizing of bolshevizing the Baltic, although Russia had enough forces concentrated there to accomplish this without much difficulty. With one eye cocked on Berlin, Moscow was proceeding with caution. "We know," stated the new Estonian Premier, Vares, "that the Soviet Union respects the sovereignty of other nations."<sup>19</sup> Was he naïve enough to believe that his country would be given an opportunity to develop along strictly democratic, non-Communist lines? This illusion, apparently, was also shared by a number of anti-Communist Socialists who were used for the moment as a convenient shield for Soviet policy.

Among the first acts of the new governments was the annulling of the ill-fated Baltic agreement, which had given Moscow the pretext for direct interference in the affairs of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania. On July 1 Tass telegraphed from Riga to the effect that "By mutual consent the Government of Latvia had annulled its military assistance agreement with Estonia of November 1, 1923, and also its agreement for the formation of an alliance, concluded between Latvia and Estonia on February 17, 1934."

On the same day Premier Vares announced the annulling of these agreements on the part of Estonia and two days later Lithuania followed suit with a similar declaration. This was, of course, a mere formality, since under the new conditions these agreements no longer had any reality.

The three new governments also proclaimed the dissolution of the local parliaments. The Communist parties were legalized; imprisoned members of the party were granted an amnesty, and the press was taken over by Communist elements.

Only the complete incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union still remained to be achieved. This was the logical next step, and Moscow was approaching it slowly but surely. Shortly after the formation of the new governments the official Communist organ in Lithuania, *Tiesa*, came out with a political program which was anything but democratic: only the Communist party had the right to legal existence since there was no longer any place for the "former capitalist parties" in Lithuania. Although the Communist party of Lithuania, stated *Tiesa*, was supporting the new government, it was aware that it was acting in the spirit of capitalism. However, the people of Lithuania would henceforth strive for the creation of a Soviet Republic. In as much as *Tiesa* could speak out only by direct orders from Moscow, it is clear that by the end of June—ten days after the new governments had been formed on Moscow's insistence—the Soviet Government had already decided to put an end to the fiction of Baltic independence by incorporating these states outright into the Soviet Union.

The armies of the Baltic States, whose potential strength was estimated at about 500,000 men, were now subjected to a radical reorganization. Political commissars, who had just been abolished in the Red Army, were introduced into the Baltic armies, since Moscow did not trust the regular native officers, along with propaganda staffs known as the "Political Administration." The rank and file were granted "the right to participate in the political life of the country," i.e., in the local Communist parties. Although not yet "Red," the reorganized Baltic armies were now dubbed "People's Armies." Many Soviet officers specially sent by Moscow infiltrated throughout these "People's Armies."

After the dissolution of the Baltic parliaments new elections were set for July 14 and 15. Although these were supposed to be democratic elections, only the Communist parties were permitted to participate officially. The election boards appointed by the new governments—which included some non-Communist members but in which only the Communist party was officially represented—

barred all candidates who ran on non-Communist tickets. In Lithuania alone there were thirteen such tickets, but none of them was given a place on the ballot.<sup>20</sup>

To be sure there was no official Communist party ticket. Party candidates ran for election under the label of the newly organized "Union of the Toiling People." This was composed of various Communist "fronts," such as athletic associations and cultural organizations, and of the official representatives of the Communist party. Only the "Union of the Toiling People" had the privilege of nominating candidates for election to parliament, whether Communist party members or non-Communists. Similar organizations under the same name were organized in all three Baltic States.

The main demands put forward by the three "Unions of the Toiling People" were: freedom of speech, press, and assembly; inviolability of the U. S. S. R.; and widespread social legislation. Most of their proclamations and other propaganda literature devoted much space to the "great leader Stalin" and to the "heroic Red Army." There were also a number of traditional Communist demands, but any reference to the nationalization and socialization of property was accompanied by soothing hints to the peasantry that the establishment of collective farms was not included in the program. The Lithuanian "Union of the Toiling People" proclaimed: "The land belongs to those who till it, who from generation to generation have watered it with their own sweat. Only he who toils shall have bread; we shall all go together to the well—Lithuanians, White Russians, Jews, and other toilers.

Put no credence in lies that the People's Government intends to collectivize the land forcibly, or that religious persons will be persecuted. These are malicious rumors and lies."<sup>21</sup>

The outcome of the elections was a foregone conclusion. The candidates of all three Unions of the Toiling People were elected almost unanimously—by more than 90 per cent of all the votes cast. The following election results were reported officially:<sup>22</sup>

	Total of ballots cast	Per cent of ballots cast in relation to eligible voters	Total of votes cast for the "Union of Tool- ing People"	Percentage of all votes cast
Lithuania. . .	1,386,569	95.5	1,375,349	92.2
Latvia. . .	1,179,649	94.7	1,151,730	97.6
Estonia. . . .	591,030	81.6	548,631	92.9

Since there were no opposition parties to challenge the Communists, these figures tell very little of the true sentiments of the people, except perhaps that they were aware of the fatal course of events, though too weak to change them. Some day elections of this kind, in which the results are always a blanket approval of the dictator's actions while the opposition is ever present but silent, will make an interesting study for sociologists.

Indeed, no one wanted to be singled out as an "enemy of the people." As it was, many former officials, officers, merchants, bankers, and political leaders of diverse views were arrested as "enemies of the people." This fate befell the former Foreign Ministers of the three Baltic States, Urbshis, Munters, and Piip, who were transferred under guard to Moscow, as well as the former Premiers, Merkis and Ulmanis, the former Commander in Chief of the Estonian army, Laidonner, and many others. Special "people's courts" were set up in Estonia to mete out sentences within twenty-four hours; they had the right to sentence "enemies of the people" to death, and their families and relatives to up to ten years in prison.<sup>23</sup>

The muffled protests of the people were expressed differently in the different countries. In Riga, for instance, people placed flowers before the Statue of Liberty, while in Kaunas students sewed mourning bands on their sleeves.

The political upheavals in the Baltic States now resulted in a grave economic crisis. The peasants, fearing confiscation, slaughtered their cattle indiscriminately and destroyed their property. Farm hands refused to work. The Soviet-Latvian Government accused the peasants of deliberate sabotage and threatened them with severe penalties.

Following the elections, Moscow no longer had cause to keep up the fiction of Baltic "independence." Exactly one month after Molotov had presented his ultimatums to Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, the new puppet governments and parliaments announced as the main points in their programs a request for admission into the U. S. S. R. and the "destruction of capitalism." At numerous meetings organized in the Baltic States most of the resolutions adopted were couched in the same language, as though written by one hand:

We demand a Stalinist Constitution.

We are for Soviets.

Enough of bourgeois bluff.

We demand agrarian reforms.

We want to live under the sun of the Stalinist Constitution, etc. . . .

Most of these resolutions ended on a similar refrain: "We ask for the right to join the family of the U. S. S. R." One week after the elections, the parliaments of the three states held special sessions, at which they decided to introduce the Soviet system into their countries and to apply for admission into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: "To request the Supreme Soviet of the U. S. S. R. to admit the Lithuanian [Latvian, Estonian] Soviet Republic into the Soviet Union as a fraternal republic on the same basis that the Ukrainian, White Russian, and other fraternal republics were admitted to the Union."

The following day, July 22, the three parliaments decreed the nationalization of the land, the banks and large-scale commercial enterprises. At the same time it was emphasized, as the Lithuanian resolution put it, that "all attempts upon the personal property of the peasantry, or attempts to force the toiling peasants into collective farms, will be severely punished." Special commissars were appointed to administer confiscated banks and enterprises. All funds of "reactionary organizations" were seized and an ever-mounting wave of repression and persecution of the "enemies of the people" swept the Baltic States. It did not take long for the Soviet G. P. U. to acclimatize itself in the new surroundings.

A special session of the Supreme Soviet of the U. S. S. R. was summoned for August 1 to consider these requests of the Baltic States. On the opening day of the session Lithuania was admitted into the Union. Some territories with a predominantly Lithuanian population, which had hitherto formed a part of the White Russian Soviet Socialist Republic, were now transferred to Lithuania. On August 5 Latvia was admitted into the U. S. S. R.; on the 8th Estonia. These constituted respectively the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth "fraternal republics" of the U. S. S. R. Together they embraced a territory of 61,185 square miles, with a total population of 5,900,000—2,800,000 in Lithuania, 1,950,000 in Latvia, and 1,120,000 in Estonia.

At the same session the Supreme Soviet also regulated the territorial status of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina. This was indeed a triumphal session. The Kremlin could boast of brilliant achievements in its foreign policy. Russia had expanded her territory considerably while at the same time remaining at peace. The event was celebrated with the appropriate pomp and grandeur. The star of the Soviet Union was at its zenith. "The sun of the Stalinist Constitution," reported *Pravda*, "now casts its benevolent rays upon new territories, upon new peoples." Meetings were held everywhere in Moscow. Enthusiastic resolutions of welcome to the new fraternal republics were adopted freely and generously: "We welcome you with open arms"; "Our hearty greetings to you, dear brothers"; "The yoke of capitalism has been cast off forever."

This was Stalin's greatest triumph.

Clouds, however, were gathering on the Western horizon. No one was better aware of the true situation than the Soviet elite who were at the moment being feted, honored, and extolled.



## CHAPTER X

### *HITLER'S ANTI-SOVIET ALLIANCE*

#### *I. Soviet Activity*

IN the summer and autumn of 1940 Germany and Italy set to work systematically at the creation of an anti-Soviet alliance which would embrace most of Russia's neighbors. The diplomatic groundwork for this alliance was laid between the months of August, 1940, and March, 1941.

In the summer of 1940 Germany and Italy finally decided that they must take action to prevent any further expansion by Russia in Eastern Europe. They considered the cession of Bessarabia as the last Axis concession. With the shift in the European situation after June, 1940, in favor of the Axis, Berlin and Rome became convinced that they were now powerful enough to assure their unlimited mastery in the East as well. "After the annexation of Bessarabia, Russia no longer has any interests in the Balkans"—such was the formula persistently publicized by the German, and particularly the Italian, press. In order to keep up the fiction of intimate collaboration between Russia and the Axis, this formula was mooted about in the capitals of Germany, Italy, and the Balkan countries as supposedly emanating from Moscow and expressing the views of the Kremlin.

The Soviet Government, of course, could not and did not accept this view. The Kremlin was not ready to abandon its policy of territorial expansion, which was now guided by primarily strategic and diplomatic reasons. While still pursuing its former policy of appeasing Hitler, the Soviet Government continued to woo those Balkan States whose collaboration might help to paralyze the Axis moves in that quarter of Europe. The diplomatic game which Russia was pursuing in the Balkans in the second half of 1940 and in early 1941 was, as we have seen

designed to create alliances and to cement friendly relations with various Balkan States, particularly with Yugoslavia and Bulgaria.

To inform Germany of its continued interest in the Balkans the Soviet Government as usual used indirect means. On September 21, 1940, *Red Star* published an article by the commander of a battalion, A. Airapetyan, in which the author, in discussing Anglo-German rivalry in South-eastern Europe, mentioned incidentally that the Soviet Union "had already settled all points of dispute" in the Balkans. Four days later the newspaper published a correction, to the effect that "the article of Comrade Airapetyan does not reflect the views of the editor and is merely an expression of the author's personal point of view; the editor feels that it was a mistake to publish this article." The Commissariat of Foreign Affairs thus informed the Wilhelmstrasse publicly that the Soviet Government rejected the Axis version of Russia's lack of further interest in Balkan affairs.

## 2. "*Guarantee of Rumania's Borders*"

Because of Russia's "continued interest" in the Balkans, her diplomatic relations with Rumania could not be placed on a normal footing, even after the cession of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina. The weakness which Rumania had shown in her relations with Russia marked the beginning of her disintegration. Hungary and Bulgaria now renewed their long-standing claims to Rumanian territory with fresh vigor. Stripped of the support of the Western Powers, this unhappy state fell an easy prey. For Moscow, in its desire to establish direct contact with Bulgaria through the narrow stretch of intervening Rumanian territory, the moment seemed opportune for the complete emasculation of Rumania as a military power. On August 19 the Kremlin presented the first of two notes to the Bucharest government protesting against a series of frontier incidents. Rumanian soldiers were accused not only of having sniped at Red Army men stationed along the frontier but also of having carried out aerial reconnaissance.

"As yet there have been no casualties on the Soviet side, but should there be casualties, events might take a serious turn." The second note was submitted on August 29, at the very moment when the fate of Rumania, of the Balkans, and of the anti-Soviet military alliance was being decided in Vienna.

The conflict between Hungary and Rumania had assumed such threatening proportions during the summer that the Axis Powers determined to interfere, to settle the dispute amicably, and at the same time to announce their irrevocable decision on the entire Balkan problem. On August 30 Ribbentrop met his Italian colleague, Count Ciano, in Vienna, ostensibly to settle the territorial dispute between Hungary and Rumania. After a brief discussion they decided that Rumania must cede the northern half of Transylvania to Hungary. Budapest, which had been drawing close ideologically to the Axis, now entered the Italo-German orbit wholeheartedly. The new ally of the Axis had great strategic importance, for, following the territorial revisions in the east, Hungary now possessed an extensive common frontier with Soviet Russia.

Although Rumania had lost large territories in the east and in the north and was still in danger of losing Dobrudja to Bulgaria, and had thus become a small weak state, she was nevertheless of strategic importance to Berlin. Rumania was to be an important link in the barrier which Germany was erecting against Russia from the Arctic to the Black Sea. Germany and Italy were determined to restrain the Soviet Union from expanding farther at Rumania's expense or from establishing contact with Bulgaria across Rumanian territory. On August 30, following the second Soviet note to Bucharest and obviously in reply to it, Germany and Italy decided to guarantee Rumania's borders. "At the instruction and in the name of the Italian Government," Count Ciano telegraphed on that day from Vienna to the Rumanian Foreign Minister, "I wish to inform you that Italy and Germany have undertaken as of today to guarantee the integrity and inviolability of the territory of the Rumanian State."

This guarantee not only applied to the newly established

boundaries with Hungary and later with Bulgaria, but was also a blanket guarantee aimed, of course, primarily at Soviet Russia. With its secret clauses and its obligation to render military aid to Rumania, it was all-embracing, covered all eventualities, and called for automatic enforcement. This was revealed by the Rumanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mihail Manoilescu, who, in a radio broadcast delivered two days after the receipt of Ciano's telegram, stated:

A solemn guarantee had been given us by Italy and Germany. The Axis Powers have never before, with the exception of Slovakia, given such a guarantee. They have offered absolute safety to the Rumanian state. The Italo-German guarantee is of an effective and immediately operative nature . . . At the slightest attempt upon the integrity or inviolability of Rumanian territory, the German armies will shoot. By this guarantee we tie ourselves indissolubly to the Axis Powers. Henceforth our policy will know no other course than that of the Axis, in which we place all our hopes.

In order to be able to fulfill its guarantee, Berlin was now granted the right to station a considerable German force on Rumanian soil and also to reorganize and train the Rumanian Army. The true reason back of these measures was clearly understood in all the foreign chancelleries of Europe. Few people could have doubted but that "in the future Rumania must serve as a military base against Russia"; that "the guarantee is practically intended in case of possible aggression on the part of Russia."<sup>1</sup> In Southeastern Europe the public not only was aware of the anti-Soviet nature of the guarantee but anticipated the outbreak of a Russo-German conflict at any moment. This view was clearly expressed by the Hungarian Foreign Minister, who on September 3 informed the Parliamentary Committee for Foreign Affairs that "Hungary may have to prepare for a bloody sacrifice in the near future." Budapest was convinced that the danger of a Russian-German conflict was nearer than ever.

Hungary was completely aware of the true meaning of the Axis guarantee to Rumania and of the obligations which she would have to assume as a result of it. A line was be-

ing drawn along the frontiers of Hungary and Rumania with Russia—a line which both states, under the tutelage of Germany, were henceforth obligated to defend. “The line which Hungary receives is the historic bulwark of Western Europe against the East—against the Tartars, the Mongols, and the Russians . . . A move of immense strategic importance was made at Vienna. It was military strategy which dominated the Vienna decision.”<sup>2</sup>

Rumania's “indissoluble bond” with the Axis Powers, coupled with the loss of territory, now created a serious crisis in her internal life. Several days after the Vienna Conference Premier Gîgurtu was forced to resign, and the reins of government were taken over by Gen. Ion Antonescu, who received unlimited powers. The Rumanian constitution was abrogated. King Carol was forced to flee. The country was rocked by wholesale arrests and by anti-Jewish pogroms unprecedented in brutality. Upon taking over the government Antonescu's first act was to assure Germany and Italy that he would abide strictly by the decisions of the Vienna Conference.

In the meantime Moscow, which had no illusions as to the ominous nature of the Axis guarantee to Rumania, was receiving reports from Danubian and Balkan capitals about the impending occupation of the Russo-Rumanian border by German troops. The Italo-German policy toward Rumania was interpreted realistically by the Soviets as “meaning the protection of ‘Europe's ideals’ against Bolshevism.”<sup>3</sup>

Immediately after the Vienna decisions fresh incidents occurred on the Russo-Rumanian border. On September 12 Dekanozov had deneww a note of protest to the Rumanian Envoy in Moscow. After the German “guarantee” Rumania was no longer free to act independently in its relations with Russia, and Bucharest's reply to this note, submitted on September 13, had all the earmarks of having originated at the German Foreign Office. Flatly denying that Rumanian airplanes had flown over Soviet territory or that shooting at Soviet frontier guards had occurred from the Rumanian side, Gafencu, who in July had been appointed Rumanian Envoy to Moscow, informed the

Commissariat of Foreign Affairs that, in order to avoid any future incidents, his government had "forbidden all flights in the frontier region" and had also instructed its frontier guards not to employ their arms unless Rumanian territorial integrity were actually violated.

From now on all talk of "border incidents" ceased. There were no further references to "Russia's claims to the Southern Dobrudja, Moldavia, and so forth."

The radical shift in the balance of forces on Russia's Balkan frontier was due not so much to the "guarantee" as to the actual occupation of Rumanian territory by German troops. One of the first acts of the new Rumanian Premier Dictator was to request Germany "to send a military mission to reorganize the Rumanian Army." In mid-September Gen Josef Tirpelskirch, head of the German Intelligence Service, arrived in Bucharest, ostensibly to make preliminary preparations for this "reorganization." More than a thousand picked Nazi Elite Guards (S. S.) were already in Rumania, supervising the evacuation of Germans from Bessarabia. By October, 1940, about 50,000 German troops were estimated to have taken their stand along the Russo-Rumanian frontier. At the same time German officers began an intensive reorganization of the Rumanian Army, in many respects one of the most backward in Europe.

In accordance with established tradition, all these anti-Soviet measures on the part of Berlin were accompanied by gestures of friendship toward Moscow. On the very day that the Vienna Conference guaranteed Rumania's borders, representatives of the Soviets and of Germany were signing in Berlin an agreement "regulating the borders and rights" of both countries; the new accord dealt primarily with the setting up of frontier posts along the 1,389 kilometers of the new Russo-German border. To strengthen the impression of friendly relations, the two governments chose this moment for the publication of the agreement.

The official Berlin version was that German troops had been sent to Rumania to safeguard it against "British provocation." The anti-Soviet hatchet was buried for the

moment, but Moscow knew where to find it. And a glimpse of it was given when General Tirpelskirch stated in Bucharest that "although their reorganized army will play a great role in the future war with Russia, they [the Rumanians] must at the moment avoid giving Russia any excuse to move before Germany is ready."<sup>4</sup>

In early October a large German force, consisting of infantry, artillery, and 300 tanks, took up its position along the Soviet frontier near Galatz, where a fair-sized Rumanian Army was already concentrated.<sup>5</sup> At the same time the *Auswärtiges Amt* issued a statement to the effect that all neutral and friendly countries possessing vital interests in the Balkans had been informed in advance of this move. Through Tass Moscow repudiated the claim of the German agency. This was the sole protest by the Soviet Government against the entry of German troops into Rumania. In fact, Moscow did not contradict the Berlin statement directly, but merely a version of it which appeared in the Danish *Politiken*, to the effect that "the Soviet Government had been informed in advance that German troops would be sent to Rumania; that the Kremlin had been informed of the reasons for this move and of the size of the army to be sent." This, said Tass, was not true to fact.<sup>6</sup>

On this occasion the Wilhelmstrasse was annoyed at Moscow's denial. "The Tass denial," stated a Berlin communiqué, "may be true only in respect to certain details of the occupation of which Russia was not informed in advance." With this the polemics between Berlin and Moscow over the occupation of Rumania came to a close.

Germany's military occupation of Rumania and the Kremlin's diplomatic retreat created a strong impression in the other Balkan States. The effects were clearly felt during the following months.

By January 1, 1941, several hundred thousands of German troops were concentrated in Rumania. Germany had also begun building two aviation plants, as well as a submarine base in the Port of Galatz. Rumania was becoming a veritable German military camp. The Soviet Government inquired of Bucharest on several occasions concerning

the disposition of the German troops and also complained about Rumania's "unfriendly attitude." Speaking for Rumania, Berlin replied that the newly arrived troops were merely replacing divisions sent back to Germany. During the months of December, 1940, and January, 1941, Russo-Rumanian relations were very strained.

On January 19, 1941, a serious revolt, led by the Iron Guard, broke out against the Antonescu regime. It bore a character of confused nationalism; some of the rebels even raised the slogan of the struggle "against the German oppressor." The government accused several leaders of the Iron Guard, and also the Communist party of Rumania, of being behind this revolt. There is no doubt but that some trade-unions, headed by Communists, were in sympathy with the revolt and would have been ready, at the proper moment, to turn it into a general uprising against the German forces of occupation. Eventually the Rumanian military aided by the Gestapo succeeded in putting down the outbreak, but as one result of it Russo-Rumanian relations grew still worse.

On February 12, after considerable delay, Britain recalled her diplomatic representative from Bucharest and broke off relations. The Soviet Minister, though completely inactive, remained in the Rumanian capital. An ominous lull now settled over the Russo-Rumanian frontier. In Bucharest there was open talk about an imminent military conflict with Soviet Russia.

### 3. *The Danubian Commission*

The struggle between Russia and Germany for control of the Danubian Commission had been a part of the general struggle for Rumania. As already indicated in Chapter VII, §3, Berlin was making every effort to eliminate the existing Danubian Commission, with England and France among the members. At the beginning of September, 1940, simultaneously with the Axis guarantee to Rumania and the radical internal changes there, Berlin decided to dissolve the old commission. It announced a new Danubian



Conference, to be held in Vienna on September 12. All Danubian and Balkan countries were invited, including Italy; only Soviet Russia was left out.

On September 10 the Acting Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Andrei Vyshinsky, informed the German Ambassador, Count von der Schulenburg, that "the Soviet Union, being a Danubian state, cannot be indifferent to the control of Danubian shipping and cannot but take an active interest in all questions concerning the Danube River. In view of this, the Soviet Government hopes to receive from the Reich government all information regarding the Vienna Conference of experts in so far as it relates to international questions affecting the Danube." However, the Vienna Conference took place without Russia's participation.

Only after six weeks of negotiations did the two governments arrive at an understanding on this problem. It was decided to eliminate all former Danubian Commissions and to form a single commission with the participation of Soviet Russia, Germany, Italy, Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia, and Yugoslavia.<sup>8</sup> The first session of this commission was held in Bucharest on October 28.

Then a conflict arose between England and Russia over the Danubian Commission. On October 29, immediately after the announcement that the old commission had been abolished, the British Ambassador to Moscow, Sir Stafford Cripps, protested against Russia's participation in the new commission. The British Government interpreted Russia's action as a violation of Soviet neutrality and of the agreements between the two countries. Downing Street had no intention of publishing this note of protest; it was merely intended as "a legal reservation of rights" for the future.

The Commissariat of Foreign Affairs replied to the British note on November 2 and published both notes. The Soviet note stated bluntly that the formation of the new Danube Commission was an act of justice to right a wrong committed by the Treaty of Versailles; it insisted that only states directly interested had a right to participate in the regulation of Danubian affairs and not countries distant from the Danube.

The Soviet reply stood firm both as a rebuff to England and as a refusal to abide by any limitations imposed by the Treaty of Versailles. On its face value it should have pleased Germany; yet the Wilhelmstrasse was far from satisfied. In pointing out that only countries bordering on the Danube should have a right to settle Danubian problems, Russia was also aiming at Germany in so far as the lower Danube—the most important part—was concerned.

At Bucharest the Soviet delegates demanded that the lower reaches of the Danube, which separated Soviet Russia from Rumania, be controlled exclusively by a Russo-Rumanian Commission. To justify their demand they pointed out that its upper waters were entirely in the hands of Germany or her allies, Hungary and Rumania. To accept this contention would have meant the complete exclusion of Germany from all control of the lower river.

The work of the Bucharest Commission was carried on behind closed doors and few of its decisions reached the outside world. However, it is known that no agreement was reached on this question. Following the presentation of the Soviet demand, the meeting of the Commission turned into a prolonged duel between the Soviet and German delegations. At the last session in 1940, just before Christmas, the delegates even came to blows. In the meantime the Danube had frozen over and the work of the commission was discontinued. It met again in Vienna on February 20, 1941.

In fact the entire Danube was now in German hands. The Reichsmark became the official currency of the area in place of the Swiss franc, and German became the official administrative language. The position of the Soviet delegation was extremely difficult, and the new session of the commission was unproductive.

During May, 1941, when Germany and Russia were making their last effort to solve this problem, Bucharest was convinced that Moscow would give in and relinquish its demand for direct control of the lower Danube. Other more pressing problems which an agreement could no longer solve had, however, already intruded on the diplomatic scene.

#### 4. *Molotov in Berlin*

"Since the conclusion of the German-Soviet Pact," the official *Völkischer Beobachter* wrote on October 15, 1940, "nothing has occurred that could disturb the newly regulated relations of both states. The pact has proven so fruitful that the impetus which led to its conclusion is now stronger than ever." The official declarations of Soviet Russia were similar in tone. "We can only emphasize again and again," stated Molotov in a speech to the Supreme Soviet on August 1, 1940, "that friendly relations [between Soviet Russia and Germany] are based, not upon accidental considerations of a conjectural nature, but upon basic principles of state interests . . ."

Official communiqués of both governments referred to various conferences between Germany and Russia, which were being "carried on in an atmosphere of mutual trust and friendship," and to diplomatic negotiations which had led to new agreements and mutual understandings. The inclusion in the Three-Power Pact between Germany, Italy, and Japan (September 27, 1940) of a special paragraph relating to Soviet Russia\* prepared the ground for a better understanding between Moscow and Tokyo. The demonstrative participation of Axis generals and diplomats in Berlin, Rome, and Tokyo in the traditional banquets given by the Soviet Embassies on November 7, 1940, likewise created the impression of a real friendship between the Kremlin and the Axis powers. Thus, when it was broadcast far and wide that Molotov would leave for Berlin on November 10 to meet Hitler and Von Ribbentrop, it created a diplomatic sensation in a Europe already jaded by novelty.

This was to be Molotov's first visit to the German capital, although Ribbentrop had visited Moscow twice. On this momentous occasion he was to be accompanied by a delegation of thirty-two persons, including Commissar Tevosyan, Acting Foreign Commissar Dekanozov, and the representative of the Foreign Trade Commissariat,

\* See chap. XII, § 1.

Krutikov. It was officially reported that he would remain in Berlin three days. Naturally it was assumed that his visit could only lead to startling developments which might perhaps affect the entire course of the war. This was the view of Molotov's forthcoming visit in official Berlin. Even London, which consistently refused to attribute overmuch significance to Russo-German friendship, now spoke of closer relations between the two countries—"if only on paper"—since both sides were badly in need of "fresh diplomatic victories."

The triumphal reception accorded Molotov in Berlin—a guard of honor with Von Ribbentrop at its head, the playing of the *Internationale*, and so forth—was in many respects an exact duplication of Von Ribbentrop's reception in Moscow. The Soviet red flag, with its hammer and sickle, was for the first time displayed prominently in Berlin alongside the Nazi flag with the swastika; it fluttered in triumph from the masthead of Bellevue Castle, where important foreign visitors usually stopped. However the display in no wise approximated the pomp with which Mussolini had been received; no effort was made even to decorate the streets of Berlin in Molotov's honor.

Molotov had two lengthy conferences with Hitler, lasting six hours in all. They had to speak through an interpreter; this no doubt added to their difficulty in understanding each other. On November 12 Ribbentrop gave a banquet in honor of the Soviet Premier and Foreign Commissar; on the thirteenth he had breakfast with Hitler, and Goebbels, Von Ribbentrop, Ley, General Keitel, and other military dignitaries were present. In the meantime, he paid a visit to Goering and to Rudolf Hess, to whom, as chief of the National Socialist party he brought greetings from the Communist party of the Soviet Union.

Two days later, accompanied by the same pomp, Molotov departed. From the Russo-German border he sent telegrams to Ribbentrop and Hitler expressing gratitude for his reception. But his telegram to Ribbentrop was much more cordial than that to Hitler. Hitler received thanks merely for the "cordial reception accorded me in Germany," whereas he sent Ribbentrop "a warm expression

of gratitude for the generous and warm reception accorded me and my colleagues during the memorable days of our stay in Germany." Molotov had good reasons for his attitude of studied correctness toward Hitler.

The official communiqués on Molotov's visit were optimistically vague. Molotov's meeting with Hitler "will intensify the development of Russo-German relations to the mutual interest of both countries." "The exchange of opinions was carried on in an atmosphere of mutual trust and resulted in agreements on all questions which interest Germany and the Soviet Union."

So much for the official account of the only wartime visit of the Soviet Premier to Hitler. Henceforth both countries refrained scrupulously from any reference to it. On the surface it had been neither significant nor fruitful.

The facts concerning Molotov's trip to Berlin have been revealed only gradually and piecemeal. A good deal of detailed information was reported by the correspondent of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* in Turkey. Although restrained in tone, it left the impression that its information emanated from Soviet circles. A different point of view was expressed by Hitler in his speech of June 22, 1941. Subsequently S. Lozovsky, too, at a press conference held at the Narkomindel on October 7, 1941, revealed a number of facts regarding Molotov's visit to Berlin in November.<sup>9</sup> From all this material it may at present be possible to draw a fairly clear picture of the conference.

When Ribbentrop invited Molotov to Berlin and the Kremlin decided to accept, there were a number of urgent questions which both sides wished to settle as speedily as possible. On the eve of the Molotov-Hitler conference, the *Deutsche-Diplomatische Korrespondenz*, Von Ribbentrop's official organ, wrote that "the Soviet Union will be invited to aid in the formation of the new order in harmonious collaboration with Germany, Italy, and Japan." At that moment the most urgent problem for the Wilhelmstrasse was to find ways and means of enticing the Soviet Union into partnership in the Triple Alliance. The Kremlin's rapprochement with Tokyo rested on thin air so long as the Soviet Union pursued an independent foreign policy

which was at times a threat to Japan. Germany's economic requirements also demanded a considerable subordination of Soviet economy to German war needs. Hitler's attempt to induce Russia to join the Triple Alliance was less an act of friendship than the outgrowth of dire German necessity.

The Kremlin realized only too well that for Russia to become a partner of the Triple Alliance was tantamount to her losing not only her freedom of action in the field of foreign policy but even her independence. In essence as far as Europe was concerned the Triple Alliance was little more than a military bloc completely subservient to Germany. Much as Stalin sought to avoid a decisive conflict and to continue Russo-German collaboration, he could only reiterate Moscow's previous policy toward the Triple Alliance and reply in the negative to Hitler's invitation to join it.\*

Hitler had hoped to impress London with Germany's military invincibility by inducing the Russians to adhere to his military bloc. The Axis was preparing to startle the world with a new diplomatic triumph. But Moscow was reticent. Even before Molotov left for Berlin, Moscow had made it clear that he would meet with representatives of Germany alone. No diplomatic conferences with envoys of third states were scheduled. Even at the receptions in Berlin representatives of Japan and Italy were neither invited nor present. Thus the Soviet Government sought to emphasize again that it was independent in its foreign policy, that Russia would not enter into a coalition.<sup>10</sup>

Molotov also had a number of questions to take up in Berlin. He questioned Hitler on the nature of Germany's guarantee to Rumania. Was it aimed at Russia? Hitler's reply was evasive. Subsequently he claimed to have informed Molotov that "the guarantee is a general one and is unconditionally binding."

The Soviet Foreign Commissar broached the question of Bulgaria, intimating that it lay within the Soviet "sphere of security." On this point Hitler was forthright. He re-

\* "In November, 1940, a proposal was made to the Soviet Government to join the Tripartite Pact and to convert it into a four-power pact. The Soviet Government did not deem it possible to accept the offer" (*Pravda*, April 20, 1941.)

fused to relinquish any rights in Bulgaria, and even told Molotov that he would inform the Bulgarian Government of Russia's claims. It was significant that immediately following Molotov's visit King Boris of Bulgaria was invited to confer with Hitler. The problem of the Danubian Commission was also discussed by Hitler and Molotov.

In the light of the Italian-Greek War which had just begun and of Germany's increased activity in the Balkans, Turkey was now in the center of the political arena. Molotov stated, obviously as a sop to the Axis, that neither Greece nor the Aegean area was within the Russian sphere of interest. He insisted, however, upon the maintenance of the status quo in the Dardanelles and in the states bordering on the Black Sea. Incidentally, Hitler and Von Ribbentrop subsequently claimed that Molotov had demanded not the status quo in the Dardanelles but the right to establish naval and air bases on the shores of the Bosphorus. Hitler, who was already seeking to hold to a minimum Soviet influence in the Near East, particularly in Turkey, would not accept Molotov's view. In this, again, no understanding was reached between the two countries.

Finally Molotov broached the question of Finland. At that moment German troops, ostensibly in transit to Norway, were already stationed in several western districts of Finland. Moscow had protested against this violation of the Russo-German Pacts of August and September, 1939, which had placed Finland within the Soviet "sphere of interest." Germany's activities in Finland, beginning with September, 1940, were in every respect contrary to the pact. Molotov demanded the immediate evacuation of troops.\* To this Hitler partly agreed. He promised to recall all German troops from the Finnish ports. However he informed Molotov "in no uncertain terms that a new war against Finland would be intolerable."

Molotov also took up minor questions, such as the liquidation of German property in Bessarabia and in Northern Bukovina, the final delineation of the Russo-German frontier in Poland, and trade questions.

\* After June 22, 1941, the Finnish Government referred repeatedly to this Berlin conference in justifying the militant policy it then adopted toward Soviet Russia.

At these conferences Hitler had his only opportunity to negotiate directly with the head of Russia's Foreign Office. From his six hours' conversation with Molotov, which left all essential problems unsettled and only sharpened the conflict between the two countries, Hitler emerged strengthened in his conviction that harmonious collaboration between Germany and Russia was utterly impossible.

London estimated correctly the results of the Berlin conferences. Despite the exultant articles that were published in the Axis press, Downing Street insisted that the German glee was "mere window dressing." Moscow, too, was vague on the results of the conferences. The Tass communiqué was identical with the German except for a significant change in translation. Where the German communiqué stated that "the exchange of views resulted in complete agreement on all questions," the Russian translation read: "The exchange of views resulted in an understanding."

Germany's reaction to the failure of the Berlin conference was to intensify her efforts for the formation of an anti-Soviet alliance.

### 5. *The Triple Alliance*

No sooner had Molotov left Berlin than Von Ribbentrop's Foreign Office embarked upon feverish activity.

The Triple Alliance which Russia had refused to join was a convenient means of uniting all anti-Soviet forces, all of Russia's small neighbors who could thus become Germany's allies without infringing upon diplomatic decorum. The Three-Power Pact was particularly suited for this purpose since paragraph 5 which was ostensibly included for the protection of the Soviet interests absolved Germany and Russia's smaller neighbors from any charges of attempting to create an anti-Soviet coalition.

One after another Russia's small neighbors were invited to add their signatures to the pact. On November 20 Hitler, Ribbentrop, Count Ciano, and other representatives of the Axis gathered in Vienna to receive Hungary into the Triple Alliance. As usual, the occasion was rich in pag-



eantry designed to create an impression upon the non-totalitarian world. While affixing his signature, Premier Teleki of Hungary made a friendly gesture toward Soviet Russia by referring specifically to paragraph 5 of the pact. The aim of Germany and Italy in forming this alliance with Japan, he declared, "was to assure a peace based on international justice; Hungary aims to maintain friendly relations with those of her neighbors who respect her historic rights of development. The Hungarian Government is particularly gratified with paragraph 5 of the Tripartite Pact." Three days later, however, when Premier Antonescu affixed Rumania's signature in Berlin, he failed to mention paragraph 5. The following day the puppet state of Slovakia signed the pact, and its Premier failed to mention Slovakia's neighbors.

At that time the belief was widespread in Europe that Bulgaria was next on Hitler's list as a member of the Triple Alliance. At least this was what Germany hoped. But Bulgaria was not yet ready to bind her political fortunes completely to the Axis. The admission of new members into the Triple Alliance had to be discontinued for several months.

The friendly gestures of Germany and her allies toward Russia were designed to create an impression that, far from being aimed at the Soviets, the alliance was actually being formed with the Kremlin's consent; the German press intimated, for instance, that Hungary had entered the Triple Alliance with the approval of the Soviet Union. From Moscow came a prompt denial; but in spite of that the Soviet Government, too, stressed the continuation of friendliest relations with Germany. At this moment it released a new report on the activity of the Mixed Commission which had been delimiting the Russo-German frontier in Poland. "For about nine months," said the report, "both sides have worked in harmony, and the line of demarcation has been finally established."

However, in many respects the Three-Power Pact was, in fact, an extension of the Anti-Comintern Pact. Viewed on a world-wide scale, it was aimed primarily at the United States, while maintaining neutrality toward

Russia. Yet from a European viewpoint its spearhead was directed primarily against Russia, with Japan's benevolent neutrality. Churchill's estimate of the Three-Power Pact proved to be correct: it was aimed first of all at the United States, but also in a secondary degree at Russia.

### 6. *Germany's Grand Strategy and the Struggle for Bulgaria*

On September 27, 1940, the world was partitioned out between the Italo-German bloc and Japan. A week later Hitler and Mussolini met at the Brenner Pass, and again in Florence on October 28, to supplement the Berlin agreement for the partition of Europe and Africa. Italy was in an anomalous position. For four months after declaring war on England and France, she had remained completely inactive, and had not participated in any important military action. According to all indications one of the major subjects discussed and decided at these two meetings was Italy's campaign in Northern Africa and her war against Greece.\*

Italy's war with Greece began exactly one month after the signing of the Three-Power Pact, on October 27.

Another important subject at the Hitler-Mussolini meetings was the problem of Turkey, the key to Germany's traditional *Drang nach Osten*, toward the oil fields of Mosul. This time, however, Turkey's importance in Berlin's "grand strategy" was still further enhanced; Ankara's adherence to the Triple Alliance, or at least acquiescence in the transit of German troops across Turkish territory, would have completed Hitler's plan to encircle Russia. Had Germany been granted the right of transit and also the use of Turkish airfields in Asia Minor, Hitler's legions and aviation could have reached the Caspian Sea from the south and struck a devastating blow at Baku.†

\* German diplomats and other sources subsequently insisted that Hitler had advised Mussolini not to start a war against Greece at that moment and that Italy began it without consent of her ally. But this did not sound very convincing.

† The Yugoslav Premier, General Simovich, in a London Broadcast of August 10, 1941, revealed Hitler's original plan of strategy in so far as it was known to the Government of Yugoslavia. In March, 1941, according to Simovich, Germany had concentrated large

The road to Turkey lies across Bulgaria, and the struggle for Bulgaria was in large measure the struggle for Turkey. The subjugation of Bulgaria was one of the primary tasks of German diplomacy during the second half of 1940. For a number of reasons, Bulgaria was able to resist vigorously all German attempts upon her independence. From the very beginning of the new European war she was regarded as definitely within the Soviet "sphere of security." Moscow cultivated Bulgarian friendship in various ways. While Rumania was being partitioned, the Soviet Government lent vigorous support to Bulgaria's claims to the Dobrudja. On August 13, 1940, both *Izvestiya* and *Pravda* published long editorials backing Bulgaria's claims. The Kremlin wanted it clearly understood that, if the Dobrudja was returned to Bulgaria, it would be due to Russian pressure on Rumania, rather than German or Italian support. At one time Moscow had hoped that the Bulgarians would march into the Southern Dobrudja at the same time that Russian troops entered Bessarabia. Even at a later date the Soviet Government reaffirmed its support for Bulgaria's claim to the Dobrudja. It boiled down to the question of who was competent to decide Balkan questions. This was the essence of the entire diplomatic game which was in the case of the Dobrudja played between Russia and the Axis. "The Soviet Government," wrote a correspondent of the *New York Times* on August 12, 1940, "dislikes the idea that the Dobrudja question should be settled through the offices of Germany and Italy, and does not accept the Axis claim that Germany and Italy are competent to decide Balkan questions."

During the summer of 1940, when Soviet influence in Bulgaria was competing with ever-increasing German penetrations, pro-Russian elements organized "Societies

forces on the Turkish borders in preparation for an attack upon that country. The plans called also for Field Marshal List to advance on the Turks through Greece in a coordinated action. Hitler thus hoped to reach the straits in blitzkrieg fashion and, taking advantage of Russia's neutrality, to occupy Iran and Iraq (German propagandists and fifth columnists made all the necessary preparations for a German invasion of these countries and on April 3 the by now well-known pro-German coup d'état occurred in Iraq.) Thence the German armies were to turn north toward Baku and Batum. Turkey, then, played a decisive role in Hitler's strategic plans of that period.

for Friendship with Soviet Russia," which, the official Soviet version had it, "the peasantry joined with enthusiasm and in great masses."<sup>11</sup> When, on August 7, a Russian soccer team arrived in Sofia to participate in a tournament, more than 100,000 inhabitants of Sofia, headed by the entire staff of the Soviet legation, turned out to meet it.<sup>12</sup> The Bulgarian Communists, spurred on by the popular demonstration of friendship for the Soviets, even utilized the occasion to berate the Sofia government for having declined to conclude a mutual assistance treaty with Russia in the month of May, 1940.

After the Vienna Conference of August 30, 1940, Germany and Italy became too powerful in the Balkans for the Russians to cope with. One week after Hungary's occupation of Northern Transylvania, Rumania, pressed by Berlin, agreed to cede the Southern Dobrudja to Bulgaria. This was the Axis' first major victory over the Soviets in Russophile Bulgaria.

Who had been instrumental in effecting the return of the Southern Dobrudja to Bulgaria? Minor though this question may seem, it aroused political passions in Sofia and beyond Bulgaria's borders. Premier Bogdan Filov insisted that Bulgaria was obligated "to the friendly mediation and valuable support of the leaders of the German and Italian nations," while Deputy S. Vasiliev, speaking in the Bulgarian Sobranie, added that "we should be grateful to Russia who made a friendly even though somewhat belated gesture toward us." Russophile orators and propagandists insisted that the return of the Dobrudja to Bulgaria was primarily due to Soviet intervention: by occupying Bessarabia she had brought the entire Rumanian question to a climax. "In this part of Europe," they said, "nothing can be decided without Russia."<sup>13</sup>

On September 10 the Bulgarian Envoy to Moscow, Stamenov, visited Molotov, to express the gratitude of his government "for the moral support the Soviet Government has given to the Government of Bulgaria in the solution of the question of the Southern Dobrudja." "Comrade Molotov," Tass commented the following day, "expressed satisfaction with Mr. Stamenov's statement." But

at the same time Sofia also extended its gratitude to distant England, whose part in the entire affair had been negligible.

In the meantime the Bulgarian Communist party issued two proclamations, attacking Germany and Italy, and calling for a mutual assistance pact with Soviet Russia. These proclamations are particularly interesting since they were one of the means by which Moscow informed Bulgarian public opinion of its true views on the Balkan question "Germany wants to create anti-Soviet bases in Bulgaria," they said; "Nazi 'tourists' are flooding Bulgaria, and large quantities of food are being shipped to Germany." The illegal biweekly of the Bulgarian Communist party also wrote in a similar vein.<sup>14</sup>

The pressure of Germany and Italy upon this Balkan kingdom was increasing with every hour. An irrefutable argument in Germany's favor was the fact that her influence had induced Rumania to part with the Southern Dobrudja. Russia's prestige in Southern Europe was sinking rapidly. In most Balkan States a radical reappraisal of political values and reorientation of foreign policy was taking place "The Bulgars' belief that Russia would be able to counterbalance Germany in Southeastern Europe has fallen flat . . . The Russian legation in Sofia is limited to the role of an observer . . . The Pan-Slavic movement has weakened considerably in the last few weeks . . . Yugoslavia is disappointed with the result of her relations with Russia."<sup>15</sup>

Throughout Bulgaria rumors of an impending German occupation were ripe. Berlin was not yet demanding direct Bulgarian participation in military operations, but merely collaboration and consent to the passage of troops across Bulgaria. As yet Germany had no need of Bulgarian divisions. An even more important consideration was Berlin's reluctance to ask for military coöperation by a country at least half of whose people were overwhelmingly anti-German in sentiment. Germany has told Bulgaria that, in case of an Axis military campaign in the Balkans, Bulgaria would not be expected to attack any of her neighbors. Instead, she would be called upon to allow the passage of

German troops and to defend the flanks of the army and to repel counterattacks.<sup>16</sup>

The back-stage struggle for Bulgaria reached a climax in the month of November when Germany asked Bulgaria to enter the Triple Alliance. The Axis aim was to divert Sofia's attention away from Rumania and Soviet Russia, and to direct it toward the South, toward Greece, with whom Italy was now engaged in war. As compensation for entering the Triple Alliance, Bulgaria was offered an outlet to the Aegean Sea at the expense of Greece. Many voices were raised in Sofia in favor of this plan. But Russia was exerting counterpressure. Moscow cautioned Sofia against joining the new Axis bloc, which it said was directed primarily against the Soviets.

Three days after Molotov's departure from Berlin King Boris arrived in the German capital for consultation with Hitler, upon the latter's direct invitation. The main question at this meeting was Bulgaria's adherence to the Triple Alliance. Hitler had planned to have Bulgaria sign the Three-Power Pact simultaneously with Hungary, Rumania, and Slovakia, all of which became junior partners in the Triple Alliance a few days later. Boris demurred. He offered a number of reasons for his refusal, but the most important was Russia's influence in Bulgaria. Bulgaria's open adherence to the Triple Alliance would have rocked the country. As a compromise King Boris accepted an agreement which was typically "Balkan" in spirit. While remaining completely "neutral" in her foreign policy, particularly as far as it concerned Russo-German rivalry, Bulgaria obligated herself to fulfill the demands of the Axis within the Balkan area. Bulgaria's formal adherence to the pact was to take place somewhat later, when public opinion would be prepared for such a step. In the meantime, German technicians and military experts would have sufficient time to get Bulgaria ready for military action.<sup>17</sup>

As a guarantee to Hitler of his good faith Boris promised to introduce anti-Jewish legislation at once—a token of Bulgaria's ideological adherence to the German bloc. During the war the adoption of such laws against Jews,

Masons, and so forth, was not so much an indication of the internal political situation in the country adopting them as a symbol of German domination.

Upon Boris' departure from Berlin the Auswärtiges Amt released a statement to the effect that "for the moment" Bulgaria would not join the Axis. German diplomats in various quarters hinted that King Boris had persuaded Hitler of the impossibility of Bulgaria's adhering to the Triple Alliance. Sofia continued to maintain the most friendly relations with England and Russia, successfully deluding both as to its real intentions. Now Bulgaria had an effective argument for refusing to conclude a nonaggression pact with Russia; as Boris had promised Hitler, Sofia was eager to maintain complete neutrality.

Immediately upon his return to Sofia, the King had two conferences with the representative of the Soviet Foreign Commissariat, Sobolev, in the presence of Foreign Minister Popov. Sobolev asked for information regarding the King's visit to Hitler at Berlin, and also informed the Bulgarian leaders that Moscow was unfavorably impressed with Bulgaria's adherence to the German bloc. He proposed a Soviet guarantee of Bulgaria's borders which Boris rejected. Sobolev was assured, however, that in relation to Russia and Germany the Sofia government would remain strictly neutral.<sup>18</sup>

On December 20 the Bulgarian Sobranie passed the first anti-Jewish and anti-Masonic law. But when the pro-German deputy, Professor Tsankov, urged the parliamentary Committee for Foreign Affairs to move that Bulgaria adhere to the Triple Alliance, he was defeated on the advice of Minister Popov himself. At the same time the Bulgarian Minister of War stated that "Bulgaria is strong enough to assure her neutrality without seeking protection from other states."<sup>19</sup>

On January 1, 1941, Premier Filov made a trip to Vienna and met secretly with Ribbentrop on January 6. Immediately thereafter Moscow recalled for consultation the Soviet Envoys to Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Rumania, and Hungary. On January 12 Moscow, now fully informed of the extent of German penetration of Bulgaria, released through

Tass the first public warning. As so often the case, it was addressed to Bulgaria rather than Germany.

Recently stories have appeared in the foreign press, said to emanate from informed Bulgarian circles [read the Tass communiqué], to the effect that a number of German troops had entered Bulgaria, and that this was done with the knowledge and consent of the U. S. S. R.; that the U. S. S. R. responded favorably to Bulgaria's inquiry on the passage of German troops. Tass is authorized to state:

1. If German troops are actually in Bulgaria and if they are continuing to enter the country, this has taken place, without the prior knowledge or consent of the U. S. S. R., in as much as Germany has never broached to the U. S. S. R. the question of either garrisoning such troops in Bulgaria or of their passage through the country;

2. The Bulgarian Government has never discussed with the U. S. S. R. the question of allowing German troops to pass through Bulgaria and hence could not have received any kind of reply from the U. S. S. R.

The most significant part of this communiqué was the veiled rebuke to Germany for failing to "consult with Russia." According to the Russo-German Pact of 1939, Berlin was obligated to consult Russia on all questions relating to Bulgaria. Fearing a negative reply, Hitler had preferred to ignore this clause of the pact. Nevertheless, though this was a flagrant violation of the Russo-German Pact, Moscow dared to hint of it only indirectly and in the form of a strong protest to Bulgaria. Moreover, to take the sting out of this rebuke and keep up the fiction of friendly Russo-German relations, the Soviet press suddenly made public a number of economic and trade agreements concluded between the two countries.

Berlin answered Moscow's declaration with an equivocal "denial," interpreting the Tass communiqué as a denial of the rumors that German troops were entering Bulgaria. The Bulgarian Government, for its part, officially denied the presence of German troops on its territory and pleaded complete innocence. "The Bulgarian Government has made no démarche to any foreign government since there is no reason for such a démarche." Premier



Filov continually emphasized in his public speeches that under no circumstances would Bulgaria tolerate the presence of foreign troops on her soil.

Toward the end of January, 1941, the Communist party of Bulgaria again issued a declaration demanding the immediate conclusion of a treaty with Russia. The inspiration of this declaration was only too obvious, particularly since Moscow was pressing for a Russo-Bulgar mutual assistance pact.

By now Soviet prestige with the Bulgarian Government had reached the vanishing point. Germany was making no secret of the fact that she was ready to resort to arms. Moscow's protests could have been effective only had it been ready to back them up by direct military action. In as much as the Kremlin had demonstrated no intention of using any type of action other than diplomatic, Germany's victory was assured.

"At every step one observes the weakening of Russia's diplomatic position in the Balkans," reported the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* on February 21, 1941. "In the autumn Russia still felt strong enough to dispatch Sobolev to warn Bulgaria against joining the Triple Alliance; now Soviet diplomacy is completely inactive."

In the meantime large quantities of German military materials were being transported through Bulgarian territory and up to the borders of Yugoslavia. German "tourists" by the thousands were to be found everywhere in Bulgaria, preparing airfields, building pontoon bridges, repairing the cobblestone roads through snow-covered mountains—making all the necessary preparations for the advance of the German armies. Officially, Berlin still insisted that "all rumors about the penetration of German military forces into Bulgaria, or to the effect that German troops are about to occupy Bulgaria, have no basis in fact."

At this time Bulgaria took another significant step in the direction of Germany. On February 17 she signed a Nonaggression Pact with Turkey. The intent of this pact was obvious enough; it was to secure Bulgaria against

Turkish interference in the event of open German military occupation.

Moscow's reaction to this pact was to issue another "denial" through Tass:

The Swiss newspaper, *Baseler Nachrichten*, recently published a story to the effect that the latest agreement between Bulgaria and Turkey had been concluded with the active participation of the Soviet Union. Tass is authorized to state that this report does not correspond to fact.

Finally, in February, Germany decided to come out into the open. Berlin demanded of Bulgaria outright adherence to the Triple Alliance. On March 1 Premier Bogdan Filov signed the Three-Power Pact at Vienna in the presence of Hitler, Ribbentrop, and other Axis dignitaries. In a solemn speech Ribbentrop stated, obviously referring to Yugoslavia, that "more and more states would soon enter the Alliance." Filov, in reply, stressed once more that "Bulgaria aims to continue and to develop further her friendly relations with Soviet Russia." He made a similar declaration the following day to the Bulgarian Sobranie. Two hours after Filov affixed his signature to the Three-Power Pact German motorized divisions crossed Bulgaria's borders.

On the day of the Vienna Conference the Bulgarian Government informed the Soviet Minister in Sofia that it had consented to the passage of German troops through Bulgarian territory. Two days later the Soviet Government declared:

First, the Soviet Government cannot share the opinion of the Bulgarian Government as to the correctness of the latter's position in this matter, since the position, irrespective of the desire of the Bulgarian Government, does not lead to the consolidation of peace but to the extension of the scope of the war and to Bulgaria's becoming involved in it.

Second, in view of this, the Soviet Government, true to its policy of peace, cannot render any support to the Bulgarian Government in the application of its present policy.

The Moscow radio broadcast this declaration in Bulgarian for three consecutive days.

For Germany the subjugation of Bulgaria was a *fait accompli*. The only excuse offered by Berlin for its failure to consult Russia was that Hitler "will not tolerate any limitations when it concerns the struggle with Great Britain." However, the Auswärtiges Amt, in commenting on the Moscow declaration, stated that Russia's "point of view is clear since she is a neutral country."<sup>20</sup>

In Sofia Russia's declaration was interpreted as a sign of weakness. The Bulgarian Communists too were irresolute. They instructed their followers not to cooperate with the forces of occupation, but also to avoid all inimical acts.<sup>21</sup> To be sure, this line did not preserve them from brutal acts of repression which began as soon as the Germans occupied Bulgaria.

In the meantime Anglo-Bulgar relations took a sharp turn for the worse. On February 28 the British Minister warned the Bulgarian Government that Britain would be forced to sever diplomatic relations if the flow of German technicians and "tourists" was not checked. Sofia ignored the British warning, and on March 5 London recalled its Envoy from Sofia and broke off diplomatic relations with Bulgaria.

Despite the parallelism of their policies, Great Britain and Russia had not collaborated in the struggle over Bulgaria, all subsequent charges of Berlin notwithstanding. The Soviet Government kept up formal relations with Bulgaria while playing, however, a passive role.

### 7. *Finland and the Anti-Soviet Alliance*

For fifteen months after the Peace of Moscow Finland found herself caught in the tug-and-pull of Russo-German rivalry. Helsinki was by no means ready to become a party to the Axis. If a "guarantee" of Finland's borders by Germany did in fact exist, it was known only to a small circle and could have exerted no influence upon the Finnish people at large. The majority of Finns were strongly anti-Nazi, and in the spring of 1940 a full-fledged military alliance between Finland and Germany was neither possible nor thinkable.

To reconcile the vanquished with the victor requires great political tact, a mastery of the art of diplomacy. Since few statesmen have ever possessed these qualities, history knows few cases in which the vanquished have ever become friends with the victors. Bismarck was able to make a trusted and devoted ally of Austria after her defeat by Germany. In some cases England has been able to win the friendship of peoples she conquered, although she failed miserably in Ireland and India. But the Kremlin's attitude toward the "Finnish White Guards," the "Mannerheim Clique," and "Tanner's party of Social Fascists" (Moscow's label for the Social Democratic party, Finland's largest political party) was certainly not conducive to the establishment of friendly relations even after peace had been concluded. Yet only a genuine rapprochement between Finland and Russia could have paralyzed Germany's influence and defeated the attempts of certain influential elements to steer Finland toward the German bloc.

Because of her international position, her ideology, and her foreign policy, Soviet Russia could not adopt a course of reconciliation. Distrustful of international alliances, morbidly suspicious of all "capitalist" governments, discerning in every alliance a design upon the Communist state, and relying strictly on its own military strength, Moscow, in March, 1940, began a series of negotiations with the Finnish Republic, often over minor unimportant questions, but which eventually led to conflicts. When Moscow realized that its policy tended to enhance Germany's influence, while Russia's declined correspondingly, it became more rigid, more exacting, thus heaping fuel on the fire of German-Finnish intrigue in Helsinki.

The first dispute between Russia and Finland after the Peace of Moscow was over the Northern Defensive Alliance, which Helsinki had planned to conclude with Sweden and Norway while peace was still being negotiated. As mentioned earlier, Molotov had scotched this plan. Then, in mid-April, 1940, Moscow demanded the restoration of industrial property in the territory ceded to Russia, property which Finland had removed. This, Molotov declared, was contrary to article 6 of the Protocol appended

to the Treaty of Moscow, and he called on Finland to restore or compensate for it.

Following the fall of France, the Soviet Commissariat of Foreign Affairs launched upon a feverish diplomatic campaign. The Baltic States were about to be incorporated into the Soviet Union. Bucharest was pondering over a Soviet ultimatum. On June 23 Russia demanded a mining concession for the Petsamo nickel mines. On July 9 she asked for the right to transport Soviet troops on Finnish railways, and on August 27 the demilitarization of the Aland Islands.\*

For a state to grant to a foreign power the right to transport troops over its territory is under international law a flagrant violation of neutrality, and can result in serious complications. In the treaty by which Hankö was ceded to Russia, no mention was made of supplying it with arms or reinforcements through Finnish territory. It had been definitely assumed that Russia would communicate with Hankö by sea through the Gulf of Finland. However, the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, obviously concerned with the specter of German domination in the Gulf of Finland, requested Helsinki to allow Soviet troops to be transported by Finnish railways to and from Hankö. According to Finnish sources, Molotov asked that this request and the eventual agreement of September 6 on Soviet transit be kept secret. Nevertheless, Germany soon learned of it. President Risto Ryti mentioned the matter in his speech of August 18. On September 25 Soviet troops began to move over Finnish railroads.

Berlin was not slow in reacting to this new Russo-Finnish agreement. As early as July 18 the Swedish Communist press, obviously in response to information from Moscow, complained of the movement of German troops to northern Norway. What aims, it asked, does Germany pursue in sending troops to areas bordering on Finland and

\* Official *Finnish Blue-White Book*, published in the United States with a preface by Hjalmar J. Procopé, Minister of Finland to the United States, after the outbreak of the new Russo-Finnish War. It omits or passes over in silence a number of documents which the compilers evidently found unsuitable to their purposes. Not one document dealing with Finnish-German relations, and only part of the diplomatic correspondence with Soviet Russia, during the interwar period, is included.

too remote from Norway's Atlantic shores to be explained away as a precaution against British threats<sup>22</sup> After the agreement of September 6 Hitler dropped all pretenses. Exerting ever greater pressure upon Helsinki, he gained a major concession, which constituted a significant victory for Berlin. On September 24 the Finnish Government consented to the passage of German troops through its territory. Ostensibly these troops were destined to garrison northern Norway, but significantly, Helsinki at once barred all foreigners and even Finns from the districts where they were to disembark. This made it impossible for outside diplomats or military attachés to check on the troop movements. The only conclusion to be drawn by the anti-German powers was that a German military force was establishing itself in Finland with Helsinki's connivance. On September 27 Great Britain protested to Finland against the transit of German troops. The Soviet press, however, merely reported the Finnish-German agreement without comment.

At this time Moscow and Helsinki engaged in another sharp diplomatic exchange over what the latter termed Russian interference in Finland's domestic affairs. During the summer of 1940 a certain Society for Peace and Friendship between Finland and the U. S. S. R. began to display unusual activity. What was more, it openly functioned with Moscow's support. On July 29 and August 2 this society organized demonstrations in Helsinki and other parts of the country against the Finnish Government and in favor of Soviet Russia. The police dispersed the demonstrators. The Soviet press poured its wrath upon the "Helsinki clique." Molotov came out openly in support of the society. In his speech of August 1, 1940, he stated that

it should be understood that unless certain elements in ruling Finnish circles do not cease their repressive measures against those classes of the Finnish population which are endeavoring to strengthen good-neighborly relations with the U. S. S. R., the result may be harmful to the relations between the U. S. S. R. and Finland.

The Finnish Envoy in Moscow, Paasikivi, alarmed by the violent tone of the Russian newspapers and by Molotov's statement, departed at once for Helsinki to consult with his government. On August 7 the demonstrations were repeated. Finland raised the charge of Soviet interference in her internal affairs.

Rumors of a new military conflict impending between Finland and Russia began to circulate throughout the Scandinavian countries. There were alarming reports as to the strength of the Red Army along the Finnish frontier, and Swedish Government circles were convinced that a new war was imminent.<sup>23</sup> The Finnish Government now signed a new trade agreement with Germany; it sent army officers for their summer "vacation" to Germany; Helsinki recognized *de jure* the German puppet state of Slovakia.<sup>24</sup>

The Germans made every effort to win Finnish friendship. The German military authorities in Finland maintained a cordial attitude toward the local population. On October 22, for instance, the German commander in Uleaborg laid a wreath on the graves of Finnish soldiers who had fallen in the recent Soviet-Finnish War and also in the War of 1918. The anti-Soviet implication of this gesture was unmistakable. There were no popular protests against the transit of German troops through Finnish territory.<sup>25</sup>

At the beginning of October a new political party was organized in Helsinki under the name of "The Resurrection of Finland." Initiated by about eighty members of the various Finnish parties, excepting the Socialists, it proclaimed as its program "the defense of the state against internal and external enemies, the resurrection of the spirit of nationalism, the spread of the Christian faith," and so forth. Prominent among its leaders were the former Foreign Minister, Erkko, and the editor of the largest Finnish newspaper, *Helsinki Sanomat*. Essentially, The Resurrection of Finland was a coalition of all pro-German forces. A week later, an official Finnish National Socialist party was launched under the leadership of Col. Awi Kalsta. Both organizations were primarily anti-Soviet.

A general turn of the government's policy toward Ger-

many was more and more evident each month. Leading circles, contrary to popular anti-Nazi feelings, inclined to friendship and even alliance with Germany. A neutral position and impartiality between the rival giants, Germany and Russia, being no longer possible, the choice fell for Germany.

The Social Democratic party, the largest and most popular political party in Finland, found itself in a difficult position. This party represented pro-British and anti-German sentiment in the country. Under fire both from Russia, with Molotov demanding categorically that Tanner, the Social Democratic leader, be expelled from the government, and from the pro-German elements, it completely lost its bearings and political balance. Moscow's threats and the danger of a new war had a disintegrating effect on one of the most democratic parties in Europe. The Left wing of the Finnish Socialists, headed by Karl Wiik, Ryoma, and Sundström, demanded "closer relations with Russia while maintaining Finnish state sovereignty," and began to publish their own newspaper, *Waapa Sana* (*The Free Word*). Aside from the official Finnish Communist party, they were the only active group which advocated a rapprochement with Soviet Russia and which struggled vigorously against the growing influence of Germany.

At Molotov's conference with Hitler in November, 1940, the latter promised to honor the agreed division of "spheres of interest" between the two countries and not to station German troops in Finland. Molotov, in turn, promised not to encourage the Society for Peace and Friendship and to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of the Finnish Republic. However, immediately upon the Soviet Premier's departure, Hitler informed Helsinki that, "in the course of his negotiations in Berlin, Mr. Molotov has proposed that the U. S. S. R. should be allowed to attack Finland a second time, without interference by Germany."<sup>26</sup> The German Government not only did not keep its promise to recall its troops but early in 1941 began sending still more soldiers to Finland.

As German influence grew, particularly as the number



of German troops increased, the threat to Russia of sudden attack from that quarter assumed ominous proportions. No wonder the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs and even Molotov personally were constantly preoccupied with Finnish affairs. The Finnish Envoy later told of numerous conferences with Vyshinsky and Molotov over seemingly unimportant questions. With each conference the tone of the Soviet leaders grew more irritated; Soviet fear of Germany is evidenced in many documents relating to these conferences. On December 7, for instance, Molotov discussed with Paasikivi the forthcoming nominations of candidates for the presidency of Finland. "We shall judge," Molotov informed Paasikivi, "whether Finland desires peace with the U. S. S. R. by who is chosen president. Obviously if someone like Tanner, Kivimaki, Mannerheim, or Svinhufvud is elected president, we shall conclude that Finland does not wish to observe the Peace Treaty she has concluded with the U. S. S. R." Paasikivi protested that the election of a president was a purely domestic affair. Molotov agreed but added, "You can elect whomever you like to the presidency, but we have the right to draw our own conclusions."<sup>27</sup>

To keep a closer eye on the movement of German troops, the Soviet Government more than doubled its consular and diplomatic staff in Finland. By 1940 there were over 200 Soviet consular and diplomatic representatives in the country, thirty-one of whom enjoyed diplomatic immunity. This also led to several bitter disputes. Russia demanded unrestricted rights of travel for all officials of the Soviet Legation in Finland including all prohibited areas from which both Finns and Germans were anxious to exclude the Russians. According to the official *Blue-White Book*, the Soviet even requested for its diplomatic representatives the use of Finnish submarines as a means of transportation.

The two major questions which marred relations between Russia and Finland were the disputes over the Aland Islands and over Moscow's attempt to gain control of the Petsamo nickel mines.

## ALAND ISLANDS

The Aland Islands, situated at the outlet from the Baltic Sea into the Gulf of Bothnia, were of major strategic importance to all four Baltic countries—Finland, Sweden, Germany, and Soviet Russia. Early in 1939, when Germany was still regarded as the main enemy, the Kremlin, fearing that in case of a military conflict the islands might be seized by the Germans as a base for their Baltic fleet, prevented their fortification by Finland. After the pact of August 23, 1939, when the Finnish Republic fell within the Soviet "sphere of interest," Moscow abandoned its objections to their fortification, provided that it was carried out by Finland alone and without the participation of any outside power. Germany was apparently engaged in a long and exhausting war with the Western Powers; Russia felt secure in the Baltic, and saw no objection to the fortification of the Alands, particularly since they could now be regarded as an advanced post of Soviet influence. Helsinki proceeded to fortify them.

By June, 1940, however, the international situation had changed drastically. German influence once more had become a threat in the Baltic, particularly in Finland. On June 27 Molotov informed Paasikivi that the Soviet Government insisted upon the demilitarization of the Aland Islands.

Negotiations dragged on for several months. In the end Finland capitulated all along the line. In August it undertook to dismount all heavy guns, remove all other arms, and transfer the garrisons to other parts of Finland. Nevertheless, the bargaining continued for another two months. Only after Molotov threatened the Finns with military measures did Helsinki consent to sign an agreement for the demilitarization of the islands. Paasikivi reported his final discussion with Molotov on September 30: "Molotov was very angry and said that one cannot negotiate with you, this matter, too, has remained open for months. With the Germans one can settle even big matters in a few days."

He promised, Paasikivi related, "to give me later a written proposal, and demanded a solution of this question within one week."<sup>28</sup> On October 11 the agreement was signed. In the first article Finland agreed "to demilitarize the Aland Islands, not to fortify them, and not to place them at the disposal of the armed forces of any other powers."

#### PETSAMO

The question of the Alands was settled. But that of the Petsamo nickel mines led to even more prolonged and more tortuous negotiations.

Finland had come into possession of this small Arctic port after the World War of 1914. Situated in a narrow corridor separating Russia from Norway, Petsamo adjoins the Port of Murmansk, which was important in the first World War in supplying Russia despite the blockade of the Baltic by Germany and of the Black Sea by Turkey. The possession of Petsamo had no important strategic value for Finland; as long as she was not allied with any of Russia's enemies, her control of it presented no danger to the Soviets. As soon as a Finnish-German military alliance became a possibility, there arose the danger of Petsamo becoming a base from which enemy submarines would prey on Russian shipping.

When the Treaty of Moscow was signed on March 12, the U. S. S. R. left Petsamo to Finland. In fact, the Soviet Government protested indignantly against rumors of its having planned to annex the Arctic port. Now, barely three months after the treaty had been signed, Moscow could not very well demand the outright annexation of Petsamo. Hence, although its true nature was obvious, the new demand had to be concealed under the cloak of economic interests.

Petsamo contains the famous nickel mines which had been held since 1934 by the British-Canadian Mond Nickel Company under concession. This company had an agreement with the German chemical trust, the I. G. Farben-Industrie, to supply it with nickel from these mines. The exploitation of the mines which, it was estimated, would

yield about 12,000 pounds of nickel a year, had not yet begun; large-scale production of nickel was due to start in December, 1940.

In the summer of 1940 Berlin asked Helsinki to transfer the mining concession of the Petsamo mines to Germany. This would have given the Germans not only economic advantages but, what was even more important, an important military base against Russia. It was at this moment that Moscow intimated to Finland that it was interested in the Petsamo nickel mines. On June 23 Molotov inquired of Paasikivi whether Finland would grant the nickel concession to the Soviet Union or agree to the establishment of a joint Russo-Finnish company. He emphasized that Russia was interested not merely in the ore but in the area itself, and requested that the concession of the British-Canadian Mond Company be cancelled. On the surface this was a step against England, against a British firm with large capital invested in the mines. Actually it was but another move in the game of Russo-German rivalry.

The negotiations over the nickel mines were prolonged, confused, and futile. Obviously reluctant to give Russia control over the mines, Helsinki alluded to its agreement of 1934 with the British-Canadian company and protested that Finland could not unilaterally invalidate the concession. When finally approached, London made no difficulty. Downing Street was ready to give up the concession provided Finland guaranteed that Germany would not secure nickel from the Petsamo mines. Germany, however, insisted on Finland's fulfillment of her agreement with the British-Canadian company. She was ready to compromise with Russia on the question of the concession but not to renounce her right to the nickel. Berlin demanded 60 per cent of the total output.

Throughout the negotiations the Finnish Envoy in Moscow, not without a touch of irony, acted the part of a loyal friend of the Soviets, whose hands, unfortunately, were tied by international obligations. He had Helsinki send inquiries to London and to Berlin, and constantly alluded to the legal difficulties involved. There seemed to

be absolutely no way of extricating oneself from the maze of international legality. In the meantime Molotov and Vyshinsky were becoming more and more irritated. However, they were careful to shun new conflicts with other powers. When the Helsinki government finally agreed to a joint Russo-Finnish concession for the nickel mines, new legal problems arose, whose solution resulted in ever new conflicts. Moscow demanded that the managing director to be in virtual control of the entire Petsamo area and 20 per cent of the technical staff should be Russian. Finland would not agree. Again the negotiations came to a standstill. Finally they were shifted to Moscow, where they continued from January till March without achieving concrete results.<sup>29</sup>

At the end of April, 1941, Moscow and Helsinki again made an attempt to reach an understanding and to improve their general relations. On May 5, on the occasion of the first visit of the new Soviet Minister, Orlov, the Finnish Foreign Minister, Witting, suggested that the U. S. S. R. consider the abandonment of its demand for a joint Russo-Finnish concession of the Petsamo nickel mines and settle the matter on a purely commercial basis without interfering with the existing concession. Five days later the Finnish representative in Moscow discussed this problem for the last time with the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Vyshinsky. This was on May 10.

#### ON THE EVE OF A NEW WAR

In the early spring of 1941 Russo-Finnish relations had improved somewhat. This slight betterment coincided with Moscow's final attempt to settle its differences with Hitler amicably. Trade negotiations with Finland were renewed on Russia's initiative. The Petrozavodsk radio discontinued its anti-Helsinki broadcasts, which had been a daily feature for several months. On May 12 a protocol finally regulating the Russo-Finnish frontier was published.<sup>30</sup> When Paasikivi, who was giving up his post, was about to leave Moscow on June 1, he was received by Stalin,<sup>31</sup> who even agreed to ship 20,000 tons of grain to

Finland, despite the lag in Finnish exports to Russia.\*

By this time Germany had already taken over all the key positions in Finland. A sports tournament between German and Finnish teams was held in northern Finland. A German business exhibition and exhibitions of German books and publications opened in the Finnish capital, and active trade was going on between the two countries. On April 30 *Pravda* also reported that a German force, consisting of 12,000 troops and an entire motorized division, had landed in Finland. Helsinki insisted merely that its size was exaggerated.

All Soviet attempts during April and May to reestablish normal relations between the two countries were doomed to failure. Finland was inextricably chained to the German chariot.

### 8 *Hungary in the Anti-Soviet Bloc*

Hungary was the first of the second-rate powers to link its fortunes to the Axis. This was so natural a step for the small Magyar state that it could hardly be construed as a victory for German diplomacy. Hungary had shared Germany's postwar fate, having also lost large territories. She had also been subjected for a brief spell to a Communist regime. Germany's growing military might, which was fraught with peril for her small neighbors, presented a minor danger to Hungary. Even before the war, but especially after the outbreak of the new European war, Hungary was the first to benefit from its friendship with Germany, having regained large territories in the south, north, and east which she had lost after the first World War.

Hungary now had a long common frontier with Soviet Russia. Hence its relations with the Soviets became a question of prime importance for the Hungarian Government.

\* According to *Pravda* of June 8, 1941, up to the outbreak of the war Finland had shipped to Russia goods of a value of \$885,600 while the Soviet Union had supplied Finland with exports worth \$3,559,200. Out of an estimated Soviet-Finnish trade turnover of \$7,500,000 for each side (according to the Treaty of June 29, 1940), Russia had contributed 47.4 per cent and Finland only 11.4 per cent.

In signing the Three-Power Pact at Vienna on November 20, the Hungarian Premier, Count Teleki, had assured the Soviets of Hungary's friendship. This, indeed, was the policy of the Budapest government subsequent to the territorial revisions already effected in Southern Europe.

It is difficult to say to what degree the Hungarian Premier really believed in the inoffensive character of the Three-Power Pact. Count Teleki was one of the most paradoxical figures ever to stand at the head of a government. He believed firmly that Germany was going to lose the new world war, yet he saw no way out for Hungary other than to join the Triple Alliance. He sought to make Budapest the bulwark of "Western culture," while mistrusting both England and France. He feared war with Soviet Russia, yet despised her with all his heart. The famous book by Ivan Lajos, *Why Germany Cannot Win the War*, which made such a stir in Europe, was published in Hungary with the approval and even the aid of Count Teleki. Subsequently the Hungarian Government forbade its distribution, but not before 100,000 copies had been sold and every Hungarian officer had had a chance to become acquainted with its contents.<sup>32</sup> From this jumble of contradictions Count Paul Teleki drew his tragic conclusion . . .

Regardless of how the Hungarian Ministers interpreted Hungary's adherence to the Triple Alliance, Moscow appraised the situation realistically. The Soviet Government issued a public protest against Hungary's participation in this potentially anti-Soviet bloc. As usual, the protest took the form of a denial of a foreign newspaper story, this time of the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*. On November 23, 1940, Tass reported: "The *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* has stated recently that Hungary signed the Three-Power Pact with 'the consent and even approval of the Soviet Government.' Tass is authorized to state that this does not correspond to fact." Again not a word of protest against Germany's policy.

For a brief period Russo-Hungarian relations were maintained on a correct footing. For the first time in twenty-seven years' telegraph service, which had been interrupted

on the day the World War of 1914 began, was restored.<sup>33</sup> Direct railway connections were established across the new Russo-Hungarian border. Mutual cordiality went so far that the Soviet Government offered to return Hungarian military trophies of the War of 1849, which had been kept in the Moscow Museum of the Revolution. On March 20, 1941, the first direct train to cross the Russian border into Hungary brought with it fifty-six old Hungarian flags and other military trophies.

Even after Hungary's adherence to the Triple Alliance Count Teleki was able to preserve normal conditions at home. Squeezed in between warring Germany and Rumania which was now little more than an armed camp, Hungary, it seemed, still benefited from all the advantages of peace, avoiding even the complete mobilization of her military forces. True, the Vienna agreement granted Berlin the right of transit and there was a continuous stream of German soldiers and arms passing through the country to Rumania. But this movement remained almost unnoticed by the Hungarian population.

Three weeks after signing the Three-Power Pact, Hungary also signed a treaty of friendship with Yugoslavia, an act which diplomats immediately interpreted as an indication that Budapest intended to maintain its independent foreign policy, or even as the germ of a new "alliance of neutrals" which would include Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Turkey. Berlin encouraged Budapest in its relations with Belgrade, hoping to pave the way for the eventual absorption of Yugoslavia into the Triple Alliance. Consciously or unconsciously, the Teleki government was playing an ignoble and treacherous role in Balkan affairs.

Following the Belgrade coup d'état of March 27, 1941, war between Germany and Yugoslavia was a foregone conclusion. Berlin decided to ask Hungary for open military aid, in return for certain territories which Yugoslavia had received by the Treaty of Trianon. In the Axis countries Yugoslavia was now regarded as the citadel of British influence in Southeastern Europe, and a war between Germany and Yugoslavia was in essence a war with Great Britain. To add fuel to the fire, Moscow expressed its



moral support of the new Belgrade government and encouraged it in its resistance to Germany.

At the end of March Count Teleki was still assuring the British Envoy that under no circumstances would Hungary become involved in war. But German pressure was becoming irresistible. On April 3, after telling the Hungarian Government that "our future is hopeless," Teleki committed suicide. On April 6 Britain broke off diplomatic relations with Budapest, and the following day Germany attacked Yugoslavia with the active aid of the Hungarian Army.

Fearing a sudden attack by Russia, Budapest hastened to explain its position to Moscow. The Hungarian Envoy visited the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs on April 12. Moscow, already bound by a treaty of friendship with the new Yugoslav Government, could react only unfavorably to the Hungarian explanations. Again without mentioning Germany, Vyshinsky told the Hungarian Envoy:

If this statement is made in order to invite the Soviet Government to express its opinion, I must state that the Soviet Government cannot approve of such a step by Hungary. A particularly bad impression is produced upon the Soviet Government by the fact that Hungary began a war against Yugoslavia but four months after she had concluded a pact of eternal friendship with the latter.

It is not difficult to realize what would be Hungary's position should she herself get into trouble and be torn to bits, since it is known that there are national minorities in Hungary too.<sup>34</sup>

Budapest replied to this declaration by asserting that the Soviet Government had failed to evaluate the situation correctly, in as much as the Belgrade coup d'état had brought into question all treaties concluded with Yugoslavia. In all other details the Hungarian statement was similar to the arguments, even to the terminology, employed by Moscow in the Soviet invasion of Poland in 1939: the Yugoslav state had "ceased to exist," and the Hungarian Army was obliged to come "to the aid of its kindred in Yugoslavia."

With this the Russo-Hungarian diplomatic exchange ended. Germany had achieved her goal. Hungary was now

in a chronic state of conflict with Rumania. With the disappearance of the Yugoslav state, she was also surrounded by Germany and Italy. Her relations with Russia had deteriorated utterly. Thus, within two fateful weeks Hungary found herself irrevocably in the orbit of warring Germany.

### 9. *Yugoslavia*

Of all the states of Southeastern Europe which had relied upon British and Russian military aid, Yugoslavia was the only one which actually resisted German inroads with force of arms. Yet Yugoslavia had maintained a hostile attitude toward Soviet Russia longer than any other Balkan State. The Regent, Prince Paul, who exercised a strong influence on the conduct of foreign affairs, supported the Karageorgevichs' tradition of loyalty to the Russian Czars.

As early as February, 1941, Berlin began to exert pressure upon Yugoslavia. On the 14th Premier Cvetkovich and Foreign Minister Cincar-Markovich were invited by Hitler to his Bavarian castle, where they were asked to join the Axis. Hitler also reviewed with them the entire Balkan situation, Germany's occupation of strategic positions in Bulgaria, the imminent conflict between Bulgaria and Turkey, and so forth. Without committing themselves definitely, the two Ministers promised Hitler a friendly and favorable consideration of his demands.

The Yugoslav Government now sought to keep Hitler's demands secret, but they soon spread from mouth to mouth throughout the country, arousing a mounting wave of indignation among the people, overwhelmingly anti-German, particularly in Serbia proper. In the meantime German pressure was increasing, and the naïve attempts by the Yugoslav leaders to avoid a final showdown were of no avail. On March 2 Prince Paul secretly received in his Slovenian palace a mysterious emissary from Hitler. Upon his return to Belgrade two days later the political wheels began to whirl at great speed. Yugoslavia was a hard nut for the Wilhelmstrasse to crack, but Germany stood to

gain a great deal by breaking down her resistance and making her a pawn in Hitler's "grand strategy." Belgrade was playing for time, trying desperately to stave off the fatal day. Instead of joining the Axis outright, the Yugoslav Government offered Hitler a pact of friendship and nonaggression.

The British and American Governments were particularly active in encouraging Yugoslavia's resistance to Germany's demands. The latter even offered to include Yugoslavia among the nations receiving American lease-lend aid. Soviet Russia, although it acted independently of the United States and Great Britain, also urged Belgrade to rebuff Germany and offered to conclude a nonaggression pact. For a moment it seemed as if Belgrade could solve its problem by simultaneously concluding nonaggression pacts with both Russia and Germany, until Hitler scotched this idea. The project came to naught, and with it Yugoslavia's hopes of avoiding a final showdown.

The fierce struggle between pro-German and anti-German influences continued for another fortnight, keeping the country in a constant state of tension. All the Balkan countries were mobilizing. Italy had concentrated a strong army on the Yugoslav frontier. Finally, Germany issued an ultimatum demanding a Yugoslav reply within one week. Hitler could no longer tolerate a delay which would force him to postpone his plan for his great offensive in the East. The Belgrade government bowed to his ultimatum, and on March 21 it decided to enter the Triple Alliance. By this step Yugoslavia counted Soviet Russia out as a factor in the Balkan balance of power.<sup>35</sup>

The decision provoked a serious Cabinet crisis. Several Ministers resigned. The indignation of the Yugoslav people was aroused to a white heat.

On March 22, at the Belvedere Palace in Vienna, Premier Dragisha Cvetkovich and Foreign Minister Alexander Cincar-Markovich signed the Three-Power Pact. After the Yugoslavs' signatures had been affixed, both Germany and Italy presented a written declaration that they were "determined at all times to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Yugoslavia and that the Axis Powers

had agreed not to request from the Yugoslav Government during the war the right to march through or to transport troops over Yugoslav territory.'<sup>36</sup> Yugoslavia was thus the only Balkan country to receive this kind of a guarantee from the Axis.

According to a secret clause in the Vienna agreement—subsequently made public by the Deutsches Nachrichten Büro—Yugoslavia was to receive as her compensation an outlet to the Aegean Sea and the whole province of Saloniki.<sup>37</sup>

The Yugoslav Ministers, in turn, agreed to demobilize the army. This promise was the direct cause of the coup d'état of the night of March 27, when Gen. Dushan Simovich arrested Prince Regent Paul and most members of the Cabinet and proclaimed himself head of a new government. The young King Peter, whose father, King Alexander, had been assassinated at Marseilles in 1934, ascended the throne.

The new government adopted a tone of caution, even of conciliation, toward Germany. General Simovich sought to convince the German Minister in Belgrade that the fulfillment of certain points in the previous Cabinet's agreement with the Axis would create disturbances throughout the country, but that the Yugoslav Kingdom, in its desire to continue on friendly terms with Germany, was ready to carry out all the "open and public engagements."<sup>38</sup>

In the meantime the Yugoslavs had been aroused to a high pitch of patriotic fervor. Every day there were patriotic demonstrations in Belgrade, some of which were organized by the Communists who demonstrated both against "imperialist England" and against Germany. They demanded a pact with Russia. Mostly they were carrying out Russia's Balkan policy, which was as much opposed to German aggression as to Yugoslavia's allying herself with Britain.\*

The only solution of the Yugoslav problem that Russia would countenance was a direct agreement between the

\* The official German news agency reported that the Secretary of the Comintern, George Dimitrov, was at that time in Yugoslavia, directing the activities of the Communists. (*New York Times*, April 18, 1941.)

two countries. On April 3, on the initiative of the Yugoslav Envoy, Gavrilovich, negotiations were opened in Moscow. Two days later, on April 5, late in the evening, the pact was signed. This pact, concluded at a moment when German troops were already poised to attack Yugoslavia immediately, left no doubt as to its real purport. To emphasize its significance, Stalin himself was present at its signing. The press abroad carried photographs of Stalin watching Molotov and Gavrilovich signing a pact obviously aimed at Germany.

Hitler accepted the challenge. On April 6, at dawn but a few hours after the Russo-Yugoslav Pact was signed, German troops crossed the Yugoslav border. In announcing the conclusion of the pact, the Moscow radio also informed the Russian people that hostilities had commenced between Germany and Yugoslavia.

The Nonaggression Pact bound both contracting parties not only to abstain from acts of aggression against each other but also to maintain friendly relations should either of them be attacked by a third power. Concluded for five years, the pact went into force at once; ratification was to take place at a later date. Russia, there were good reasons to believe, had also promised to supply Yugoslavia with arms. However, during the negotiations there was no mention of direct military aid by the Soviets.

The Yugoslav-German War lasted eleven days. Neither Russia nor England nor America had sufficient time to fulfill their promises of aid.\* Yugoslavia herself was too ill-equipped and ill-prepared to put up an effective resistance against the German steam roller. On April 17 her army capitulated.

For a short period Soviet Russia adhered strictly to her treaty with Yugoslavia. Several score of Yugoslav aviators, who succeeded in escaping in bombers, landed on Soviet territory, where they were cordially received. Moscow sent a special train to the Hungarian border to transport the Yugoslav diplomatic and consular staffs from

\* On April 8 President Roosevelt sent a message to King Peter of Yugoslavia assuring him of speedy assistance from the United States and expressing his earnest hope for a successful resistance.

Budapest. From Berlin, too, the Yugoslav diplomats went to Russia. However, at the beginning of May, when the Kremlin was making another attempt to reach an amicable understanding with Germany, Moscow withdrew recognition from the Yugoslav legation and refused to establish contact with the newly formed Yugoslav Government-in-Exile. Only on August 5, 1941, when Russia was already at war with Germany, did Solomon Lozovsky, spokesman for the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, announce that the Russo-Yugoslav Pact of April 5 remained in force. By that time the entire international picture had changed radically.

### 10. *Turkey and Neutrality*

With the beginning of the second year of war, as the radius of military operations widened, Turkey came to be almost at the mid-point of the ever-spreading conflict. The war in North Africa threatened at every moment to turn into a war for the Near East. Italy was moving toward her war with Greece. Germany, after the speedy conclusion of the campaign in the West, was ready to embark on new conquests, this time in the Southeast of Europe. Thus Turkey lay at a crossroad, where the political and diplomatic lines of Soviet Russia, Great Britain, Germany, and Italy met.

Ankara and Istanbul became important political centers, at times the most important centers of European diplomacy. They seethed with political intrigues, with the cross web of international espionage, with rumors, with information and, very often, with misinformation. The warring powers attributed great importance to their diplomatic missions in Turkey. Germany had sent there her star diplomat, Franz von Papen, who, before going to Turkey, had been famous for his undercover work in the United States in 1914 and 1915 and for his role in Hitler's rise to power in 1933. In the no-man's land of European power-politics of the 1930's he was indeed one of the most ingenious diplomats.

Following Germany's victories in Western Europe, it

would have been only natural for Turkey to seek a rapprochement with Russia, with which she had maintained close relations for two decades. But Russia's territorial acquisitions seemed at Ankara not so much designed to improve her defenses as a throwback to the old Russian expansionism. Ankara feared that Moscow might seek to recover the province of Kars and Ardahan which had become Turkish after the World War. Even more, the Turks feared lest the Kremlin renew its demands, first put forward in October, 1939, for a change in the regime of the Bosphorus. Germany chose this moment to sow further dissension between Russia and her former ally. The sixth *German White Book*, published in July, 1940, revealed anti-Soviet plans which had been discussed a few months before in the Cabinet of the Turkish Foreign Minister, Shukru Saracoglu.

The result was a cooling off in Russo-Turkish relations, rather than a rapprochement. Ankara viewed with apprehension the close collaboration between the Soviet Envoy in Turkey, Alexis Terentiev, and Franz von Papen. Their common aim—such was the view in Ankara—could be only the defeat of Britain, who was Turkey's sole important friend left after the fall of France. One Soviet spokesman in Ankara even declared that "Soviet Russia will see the British Empire destroyed before dealing with Germany."<sup>39</sup> The cordial and even friendly tone often assumed by the Turkish press toward Soviet Russia was not convincing.<sup>40</sup> An improvement in the relations with Turkey would mean a rapprochement with England and opposition to Germany. In the summer of 1940 the Soviet Envoy left Ankara and was absent from his post for four months. There followed a complete lull in Russo-Turkish relations.

#### GERMAN PRESSURE

The situation changed drastically at the close of the summer, when Germany opened diplomatic preparations for a military campaign in the Balkans. The Rumanian "guarantee," followed by the gradual concentration of German troops in Bulgaria, marked the turning point in

Russo-Turkish relations. Toward the autumn of 1940 both countries had good reason to feel endangered by Germany's shifting of troops to the Balkans. In the spring of 1940 it had been Berlin which had sought to maintain the status quo in the Balkans, while Moscow was outlining plans for ever-greater expansion. Now Germany was expanding rapidly in Southeastern Europe, while Moscow and Ankara would have been only too happy to retain the existing balance of forces.

Alexis Terentiev, who had symbolized to Ankara Russia's Germanophile policy, did not return to his post. After a gap of four months he was replaced by Sergei Vinogradov, who arrived in the Turkish capital as the war clouds were darkening over the Balkans. He was received at once by the Turkish Premier, Saydam. A few hours later the Ankara radio, commenting on the entry of German troops into Rumania, asserted that "two million bayonets will bar the road through Turkey."<sup>41</sup> The Turkish Envoy, Khaidar Aktai, also returned to Moscow after a long absence. The Turkish Minister was instructed to ascertain the Soviet viewpoint on the movement of German troops toward the Black Sea and also on the approaching Italian-Greek conflict. He soon realized that Russia had no intention of opposing military force to Germany's aggression in the Balkans. On the other hand, Moscow was ready to promise Turkey that the Red Army would refrain from aggressive action in case the latter became involved in war; no more than that. However, the mere fact of Russia's making no demands, territorial or otherwise, on Turkey cleared the atmosphere somewhat and led to friendlier relations. Addressing the Turkish National Assembly on November 1, President Ismet İnönü stated that "our relations of confidence with the Soviet Union, which have a past of nearly twenty years, after experiencing difficulties which cannot be attributed to either of us, returned to normal friendship. In the midst of the world vicissitudes, Russian-Turkish relations are of intrinsic value."<sup>42</sup>

The influential Turkish newspaper, *Tan*, commented on November 9: "It is very fortunate that Moscow now understands our friendly feelings and that amicable relations



between the two countries have resumed their former character."<sup>43</sup>

Russo-Turkish relations had improved so far that at a reception on the anniversary of the October Revolution the Soviet Legation at Ankara had both the Premier and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey as its guests.

In the meantime Turkey was preparing for war. During the second half of November a state of emergency was declared throughout the country. There were daily blackout tests in cities and towns. Everywhere feverish preparations for the impending conflict were noted.

Molotov's visit to Berlin once more spurred Turkish fears of an all-round Russo-German understanding, which would seal the fate of the Near East, particularly of Turkey and the Dardanelles. While the question of Turkey was discussed between Molotov and Hitler, as we have seen, no understanding was reached. Hitler's aim was to draw Russia into the orbit of the Axis while diverting her attention to Central Asia. Molotov, on the other hand, refused to abandon Turkey wholly to Germany. Yet Hitler subsequently insisted that the Soviet Commissar had demanded "free passage through the Dardanelles under all circumstances" and also the "occupation of a number of important bases on the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus." This version of the Molotov-Hitler interview later became a trump card in Von Papen's game with Ankara.

Immediately after Molotov's visit, Hitler summoned Von Papen from Ankara to lay down German policy toward Turkey. As Russia had declined to enter into a full military alliance, Berlin's policy now was to seek a rapprochement with Ankara and to drive a wedge between Turkey and Soviet Russia as well as between Turkey and Bulgaria. In accordance with his usual policy Hitler's first problem was to assure the neutrality of the only state which might hamper his campaign in Bulgaria and Greece. On returning to Ankara Von Papen urged Foreign Minister Saracoglu to establish friendly relations with Germany within the framework of Hitler's "New Order." The Axis attitude toward Soviet policy in the Balkans was clearly

expressed by the influential Italian magazine, *Critica Fascista*, in its issue of December, 1940: "Hitherto Axis interests have been parallel with those of Russia, as was clearly seen in Poland. It is very possible that some day their interests may cross. An example of this would be the question of the Dardanelles."

Berlin now embarked upon an energetic propaganda campaign in Turkey, one that was open and provocative against Great Britain, noiseless but no less sinister against Soviet Russia. Once back in Ankara, Von Papen's first step was to hint to the Turks that the British Secretary of State, Anthony Eden, had promised Russia the Dardanelles. This rumor was also spread by the Japanese Minister. Von Papen also informed Ankara of Molotov's alleged demand for naval and military bases on the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus. Finally, at the very moment when large German forces were crossing Bulgaria, Hitler sent a personal letter to the President of Turkey, reviewing the "treacherous history" of Britain's foreign policy since the Versailles Treaty. On his part he renounced all claims to the Dardanelles and urged closer German-Turkish collaboration.<sup>44</sup>

Ankara now faced a dilemma: Should Turkey fight Germany, or should she maintain Turkish neutrality at all costs, even a precarious neutrality? What were Turkey's chances of successfully resisting the German avalanche? Her army was poorly equipped, and her only powerful ally, Great Britain, was too distant to be of any effective aid. No military aid could be expected from Russia, on that point Moscow was explicit. Turkey's only course under the circumstances was to retreat step by step and to allow Germany to swallow Bulgaria and Greece, her neighbor and her ally. In an agreement signed on February 17 Turkey and Bulgaria declared it "an unchanging basis of their foreign policy to abstain from any aggression." Translated into everyday language, this agreement meant that even if Germany occupied Bulgaria Turkey would not fight. This was precisely Hitler's aim: he could now occupy Bulgaria without fear of resistance by Turkey.

## ANGLO-GERMAN COMPETITION

The Anglo-German struggle for Turkey reached its apex in February and March, 1941. On the eve of the British landing in Greece and with German troops already marching through Bulgaria, Anthony Eden apparently reached some sort of an understanding with Ankara for military aid to Greece. For a brief moment it seemed as if a new military bloc were being formed, consisting of England, Greece, Turkey, and Yugoslavia, with Soviet Russia giving a cautious blessing to this new anti-German move. Nothing came of it, however. In his radio broadcast of April 27, 1941, Winston Churchill referred to this attempt, directing a veiled rebuke at the Turkish Government: "There was a very real hope that the neighbors of Greece would by our intervention be drawn to stand in the line together with her while time remained. How nearly that came off will be known some day!"

During his stay in Ankara Anthony Eden received active assistance from the Greek and Yugoslav diplomats. With the visit of Col. William J. Donovan to the Near East as President Roosevelt's personal "observer" in February, 1941, the United States too began to exert a considerable political influence in Turkey, all of which redounded to Eden's advantage. Nevertheless, there were persistent rumors that Hitler was about to invade Turkey. In Istanbul preparations were made to evacuate the civilian population. In the second half of March German forces completed the occupation of Bulgaria and approached the Turkish border. The fatal hour seemed at hand.

Hitler's move toward the Dardanelles was, in part, also a further step toward encircling Russia. Had Turkey submitted to his demands, either willingly or under duress, he could then have struck a blow at the Caucasus. This consideration prompted Moscow to hasten its negotiations with Ankara. While Russo-Turkish conversations were going on in Moscow, Sir Stafford Cripps' airplane flight to Ankara helped to expedite matters. Molotov promised not to commit any aggressive acts should Turkey be involved in war (with the Axis) and to maintain at all times

a strict neutrality. He made this declaration verbally to the Turkish Minister in Moscow, since a public declaration would have added to German irritation.<sup>45</sup> For Turkey, which was afraid of becoming, like Poland, the victim of a Russo-German agreement, this declaration was a boon.

In the meantime events were taking a turn for the worse. After the Yugoslav Minister, Cvetkovich, had signed the Three-Power Pact at Vienna, following Hitler's ultimatum, the situation was dangerous. Ankara appealed to Moscow to make public the declaration of nonaggression. The Soviet Government had also come to the conclusion that the diplomatic game was up and decided to heed Ankara's appeal. On March 25, 1941, the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs released the following communiqué:

In view of rumors spread in the foreign press to the effect that, should Turkey be forced to become involved in war, the U. S. S. R. would seek to take advantage of Turkey's difficulties and attack her, and in answer to a number of inquiries, the Soviet Government has informed the Government of Turkey that:

1. Such rumors do not correspond to the position of the U. S. S. R.
2. If Turkey should actually be attacked and be forced to defend her territory, she can count, on the basis of the nonaggression agreement concluded between Turkey and the U. S. S. R. on the fullest understanding and neutrality of the U. S. S. R.

The Turkish Government in connection with this declaration expressed its deepest gratitude to the Soviet Government and in turn indicated that, should the U. S. S. R. find itself in a similar situation, the Soviet Government too can count on Turkey's fullest understanding and neutrality.

Despite this Russian support, Germany, through clever diplomacy backed by threats, carried the day. Upon orders from Berlin, German artillery could have commenced at any moment shelling old Byzantium. With such a convincing argument at hand, Von Papen finally succeeded in his design. Turkey abandoned both Yugoslavia and Greece. On April 9 Saracoglu summoned the British, Greek, and Yugoslav diplomatic representatives and informed them that Turkey would not fight.<sup>46</sup>

Thus, in April, 1941, Turkish foreign policy made a complete about-face. British influence lost out, and with it the hope for Balkan unity went up in smoke. This was, indeed, a great diplomatic defeat for the British Foreign Office but an even greater one for Moscow. The results of this Turkish-German "rapprochement" were soon felt by the anti-Axis powers. In April Turkey permitted sixteen German transports loaded with ammunition and troops to pass through the Dardanelles into the Aegean Sea. Although it could justify this act by the international status of the Straits, the Turkish Government was only too well aware that the troops and arms were earmarked for aggression against Greece.<sup>47</sup> On April 25 Ankara also signed a new trade treaty with Germany. Von Papen went even further. He offered Turkey a treaty of friendship and even a German guarantee of her frontiers.

The rapprochement with Germany failed to solve Turkey's problems. The war in the Balkans drew to a close. The Greek islands near the Dardanelles were now in Germany's hands. With every day the threat to Turkey grew. Informed diplomats everywhere were convinced that Hitler would strike next at Suez and toward Iraq and Iran. The evacuation of Istanbul began. In Turkey the belief was widespread that the country was on the brink of war. After the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Matsuoka, had visited Berlin to discuss Japan's relations with Russia and to outline their future course, Hitler summoned Von Papen from Ankara and Count von der Schulenburg from Moscow. In the middle of May the former returned to Ankara again bearing a personal letter from Hitler to İnönü. This time Hitler urged Turkey to break completely with Great Britain and to adhere to his New Order. However, he refrained from threatening Turkey; he made no specific demands and even offered to respect Turkey's independence and sovereignty.<sup>48</sup> Von Papen also offered Ankara a number of Greek islands in compensation for permission to transport German arms via Turkey to Iraq, as assistance for the pro-German Government, and to Iran. Although he told the Turkish Foreign Minister that Rus-

sia had promised Bulgaria Turkish territory up to the Enos-Midia line, he realized that it was premature to raise the question of the transit of German arms to be used against Russia. As a token of Berlin's good will, Von Papen placed a guard of honor at the birthplace of the first Turkish President, Atatürk; German troops in Bulgaria also retired to some distance from the Turkish frontier.<sup>49</sup>

Nevertheless, Ankara kept its line to Great Britain open, informing Downing Street of Hitler's offers and *démarches*. The main task of the British Foreign Office was now to dissuade Turkey from entering into a full-fledged military alliance with Germany. London could no longer insist that Turkey offer armed resistance to the overwhelming German power. On May 21 the British Government called Ankara's "attention" to the fact that German arms were being transported to Iran over the Aleppo-Mosul Railway, part of which lay in Turkish territory.

In many respects successful in her negotiations with Ankara, Germany failed to achieve her main objective, which was to entice Turkey into the Axis military bloc and thus to enable German troops and aviation to strike at Russia from the south. All Von Papen achieved was a treaty of friendship with Turkey, which assured Hitler of Turkey's neutrality in case of a Russo-German War. This new German-Turkish Treaty, which was signed on June 17, 1941, taking effect immediately, included a clause providing for "mutual consultation" between the signatories. On the other hand, Turkey was not prepared to tear up her treaty with Britain, and in the course of the negotiations with Germany it was categorically stated that all existing agreements remained in force. Saracoglu informed the British Envoy personally that under no circumstances would Turkey permit the passage of German troops or the transport of German arms across her territory. The German-Turkish Treaty was not an alliance, but a mere neutrality pact.

Berlin made a great triumph out of the German-Turkish Treaty, the newspapers played it up as "the restoration of the traditional friendship" between the two countries and

as "the greatest political bombshell." Hitler wired to President İnönü that "our countries have now entered upon an era of mutual and lasting trust."<sup>50</sup>

Ankara was well aware of the anti-Soviet implications of the new agreement. By the middle of June, 1941, there was no longer any doubt concerning Hitler's aims. While Berlin was informing the Turks of an all-European "peace conference" which the Axis proposed calling in the near future, with Russian participation, the German saber was rattling ominously from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Moscow interpreted the Turkish-German Treaty as a stab in the back by Turkey. There was no official reaction in Moscow, however.

Thus, when Germany declared war on Russia, Turkey reaffirmed her position of neutrality. Ankara's attitude toward the "two wars" was based on a firmly drawn distinction. In the Anglo-German War Turkey was "nonbelligerent," whereas in the German-Russian War she was out-and-out neutral. "If a ballot were taken on the question 'do you wish a German or a British victory?' " wrote the Istanbul correspondent of the *London Times*, "three quarters [of the Turkish population] would vote for Britain. If the same question were put regarding Germany and Russia, the vote would be unanimous in favor of Germany."<sup>51</sup> "If the sentiments [in Turkey] are not pro-German, they are certainly anti-Soviet."<sup>52</sup>

This factor allowed Germany to continue her previous policy in Turkey. In July, 1941, Von Papen suggested to the Turkish Government that it take up the role of mediator and urge England "to go slow in helping Russia and allow Europe to remain under German domination." As a reward for this, he hinted, "Germany might consider the possibility of giving Britain a free hand in the West."<sup>53</sup> While declining to enter into any negotiations with Berlin, Britain also restrained Turkey from drawing closer to Germany and thus exerting a disastrous effect on the course of the war. However weak, Turkey, because of her geographical position, might possibly have tipped the scales of war in favor of Germany.

## MAPS

- I. August, 1939.
- II. July–November, 1940.
- III. December, 1940–March, 1941.
- IV. June, 1941.





I. August, 1939.



II. July—November, 1940. After the partition of Poland and the incorporation of Bessarabia, the Baltic States, and Finnish territory into the Soviet Union.



III. December, 1940–March, 1941. After the adherence of Rumania, Hungary, and Slovakia to the



IV. June, 1941. After the conquest of Yugoslavia and Greece by Germany and Italy, and Bulgaria's adherence to the Axis; Finland in the German bloc.



## CHAPTER XI

### *RUSSIA, ENGLAND, AND THE UNITED STATES*

#### *I. Russia and Britain*

**A**T the moment when Sir Stafford Cripps arrived in Moscow, the Soviet Government was deeply alarmed over the new events on the Western front. A German victory in the West was looked upon as a strong possibility, not only in Berlin but even in London. At this critical moment, on July 1, 1940, Stalin received Cripps. Their conference lasted three hours and was veiled in profound secrecy. Cripps brought Stalin a personal letter from Winston Churchill wherein the Prime Minister offered Russia a defensive alliance in case of a German attack upon her. Stalin declined Churchill's offer although in his conversation with Cripps he expressed his conviction that Hitler would tear up the Russo-German Pact the moment it would suit his purposes.

But the Kremlin wished to avoid any impression of a Russo-British rapprochement against Germany. Two weeks later, when the United Press finally reported this conference, its dispatch added, very significantly, that "according to Stalin, the Soviet Union had no reason to fear German domination of Europe."<sup>1</sup> Still later the *New York Times* correspondent, G. E. R. Gedye, submitted to the Russian censor a cable in which he said that "Stalin's talk with Cripps was prolonged and cordial." The Soviet censor crossed out the word "cordial."<sup>2</sup> This minor incident typified Moscow's policy toward Britain right up to the outbreak of Russo-German hostilities. Under all circumstances Stalin sought to avoid creating the impression that Moscow was conspiring with London against Berlin. In turn, England regarded Soviet foreign policy as "a riddle wrapped in a mystery."

Against their will, Russia and Britain were being brought closer together. The growing parallelism between

Russian and British policy was particularly evident in Rumania, where the climax of Berlin's anti-Soviet activities coincided this time with the expulsion of British engineers and the seizure of British property. In Bulgaria German propaganda for the Triple Alliance, as a barrier against both England and Russia, was being intensified. In Yugoslavia Gen. Dushan Simovich's coup d'état was applauded by Moscow and London. In Ankara Von Papen was making every effort to woo Turkey away from Britain, while painting the Russians in the blackest shades. When in October, 1940, Britain reopened the Burma Road, Moscow, too, stressed her solidarity with China.

Any avowed rapprochement between Britain and Russia was as yet invisible, but it was implicit in the objective situation. Moscow not only refused to admit the possibility of a rapprochement but even denied vehemently that Britain and Russia saw eye to eye upon a variety of questions. More than once the Kremlin went out of its way to emphasize that Russo-British relations were "not cordial." It is, indeed, rare in the history of diplomacy for one Great Power to parade the fact that its relations with another Great Power are "not cordial."

On the day following the Stalin-Cripps conference Ivan Maisky, Soviet Ambassador in London, garnered the first fruit of "improved" Russo-British relations. Two Soviet steamers, the *Selenga* and the *Mayakovsky*, were released by the British authorities. This act was soon followed by a personal visit of Maisky to Churchill.\* For a brief period Russo-British relations seemed to be on the mend. Not for long, however. By late July this favorable impression had evaporated, and on the 28th the *Sunday Times* again commented on the unfriendly relations between the two countries. On August 20 Viscount Caldecote, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, stated to the House of Lords that "ordinary prudence would dictate a better under-

\* On behalf of the Foreign Office R. A. Butler read the following written statement in the House of Commons "The discussion on which His Majesty's Ambassador in Moscow is at present engaged may finally remove any danger that the Soviet Government would work either economically or militarily against Great Britain in the interests of Germany. Ever since the outbreak of the war His Majesty's Government have had to guard against this danger when making military plans."

standing with the Soviet Union . . . , and that Sir Stafford Cripps is courageously and successfully facing a difficult task."

On the surface Russian grievances were confined to a few points, particularly the freezing of the funds of the Baltic States after their incorporation into the U. S. S. R.; the detention of Baltic ships in British ports, Downing Street's concessions to Japan at China's expense; finally, Britain's uncompromising stand against the annexation of territories by the Soviet Union. London contended that it could tolerate only voluntary change of sovereignty; accordingly, the British Government refused to recognize Russia's annexation of the Baltic States.<sup>3</sup>

On September 13 the British Government suggested to Moscow a settlement of their differences over the Baltic funds. The Foreign Office offered to renounce all claims to the investments of British citizens in the Baltic States, amounting to about £5,500,000, and asked Moscow to abandon its claim to the Baltic gold reserves deposited in Great Britain, amounting to £4,000,000. The British also offered to lease the Baltic ships which were interned in British ports.<sup>4</sup>

Moscow rejected this proposed settlement, and during October Russo-British relations continued to deteriorate. On the 17th Maisky again protested to Lord Halifax against the detention of the Baltic ships; in retaliation for the British freezing of the London deposits of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania, Moscow defaulted on its semiannual installment of £92,500, due in settlement of the Lena Gold Fields claims.\*

These and other disputes were surface problems and could have been settled readily enough had Moscow not been prompted by deeper and more vital considerations. Many influential persons in London failed to understand the true motives behind the Kremlin's "puzzling" foreign policy. Much was being said and written about this problem, and the British Minister of Labor, Bevin, even suggested publicly the formation of an alliance to consist of

\* The Soviet Government had obligated itself to pay Britain £3,000,000 in several installments as settlement of the British claims on the Lena Gold Mines.



Britain, Soviet Russia, and the United States. There was also hope, prior to Italy's attack on Greece, of forming a somewhat similar alliance between Britain, Russia, Turkey, and Greece.

On October 22, 1940, shortly before Molotov's trip to Berlin, Sir Stafford Cripps submitted a long memorandum to the Narkomindel (this time he was not received by Stalin, or even by Molotov, but by Vice-Commissar Vyshinsky). In it he proposed a Russo-British agreement on the following basis: England would obligate herself not to participate in any military bloc directed against the Soviet Union; she would recognize *de facto* Soviet Russia's incorporation of the Baltic States, and assure Russia of participation in the postwar peace conference.<sup>5</sup> Russia, in turn, would be bound to adopt a "more benevolent attitude towards England."<sup>6</sup>

Vyshinsky's reply to Cripps was to remark—no doubt merely interpreting the sentiments of the higher-ups—that "an alliance between England and Germany against the Soviet Union was an impossibility anyway. A postwar peace conference without Russia's participation was also out of the question. Hence, what practical reasons were there for the Soviet Union to establish closer relations with England?"<sup>7</sup> In this connection he again rehearsed Russo-British differences over the Baltic States.

Such were the sentiments which then guided the Kremlin policy toward Great Britain. Russia rejected a rapprochement with England not because the Narkomindel and the Foreign Office could not have found a solution for their differences, but because Stalin was firmly convinced that an anti-Soviet front with Britain's participation was no longer possible and that collaboration with Berlin was more advantageous than an understanding with Britain because Germany was the more dangerous enemy.

Cripps was obviously disappointed. Hitherto a staunch champion of the Soviets, he later told Vyshinsky that the cold reception accorded his proposals indicated that Russia was not interested in improving her relations with Britain.<sup>8</sup> Officially, Moscow had not even replied to the Cripps memorandum; on November 21 Lord Halifax com-

plained in the House of Lords that "our proposals are still before the Soviet Government."

On December 22 Anthony Eden replaced Lord Halifax as Foreign Secretary. Unlike Halifax, who had been regarded as a "Chamberlain appeaser," the new Secretary was known as a staunch advocate of Russo-British collaboration. London set great hope on Eden's ability to bring about an understanding with Moscow. Visiting Eden on the 28th, Maisky informed him that the Soviet Government was expecting startling military developments in the spring. He also assured Eden that Russia was not contemplating an alliance with Japan and that she would continue her aid to China. But even now there was no marked change in the relations between Britain and Russia. Soon after this first conversation with Eden, Maisky handed him a note protesting the interception by the Royal Navy of a Greek steamer carrying hides and other goods from Buenos Aires to Vladivostok.<sup>9</sup>

Russia had now developed a lively trade with the United States and with South America, a factor which prompted Hugh Dalton, British Minister of Economic Warfare, to state publicly that part of the shipments to Vladivostok was being forwarded by rail to Germany. Lord Halifax, by then British Ambassador in Washington, went so far as to call the attention of the State Department to this leak in the British blockade.

"There is ample evidence," Hugh Dalton told the House of Commons on January 28, 1941, "that the Soviets are exporting Russian goods to Germany and are replacing them by imports from the United States . . . We have made our feelings in regard to this matter quite clear to both countries concerned." On March 25, in answer to a question in the House of Commons, he repeated that "sales to Germany of goods imported by the U. S. S. R. on their own account are very small; direct transit trade to Germany by the Trans-Siberian Railway, remains, I regret to say, substantial. Moreover, there is a constant danger that abnormal Soviet imports, even though not themselves re-exported, might release for export to Germany corresponding quantities of Soviet products."

Despite these recriminations a certain parallelism of policy persisted. Sir Stafford Cripps scored a minor success in March, 1941, when he served as unofficial intermediary between Russia and Turkey. At the end of February, 1941, shortly before Britain interfered actively in the Italian-Greek War, Anthony Eden had made a trip to the Near East. Before leaving London he had a long conversation with the Soviet Ambassador and immediately upon arriving in Ankara summoned Sir Stafford Cripps from Moscow. The Turkish Government was considering measures of defense against Germany. There is no doubt but that Cripps, who reached Ankara in a special Soviet plane, was instrumental, to a certain degree, in improving the relations of Moscow and Ankara; this subsequently resulted in the Russian declaration of eventual neutrality in case of a war between Turkey and Germany.\*

London's reaction to the Moscow declaration was extremely favorable. "The declaration," stated the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Richard Austen Butler, in the House of Commons on April 2, 1941, "is being regarded by the British Government as eminently satisfactory, the Government hopes that developments will draw this country's relations with the Soviet Government closer." Twenty-two days later, however, on April 24, Butler had to admit, again in the House of Commons, that "there is no progress in these matters so far."<sup>10</sup>

After returning to London, Anthony Eden had another conversation with Maisky, on April 15, regarding an Anglo-Russian understanding. The Soviet Ambassador again raised the question of the Baltic States. Only on June 6, 1941, was an agreement reached on the minor question of releasing 350 Baltic seamen who had been detained in Britain.

In the meantime Churchill had been speaking publicly of an approaching Russo-German conflict. On April 9 and again on the 27th he predicted that Germany would in all probability strike at the "granary of the Ukraine and the

\* Upon his return from Ankara to Moscow, Cripps said to the American and English correspondents. "Hitler will attack this country before the end of June."

oil fields of the Caucasus." The Soviet press, in its reports, omitted entirely his reference to the impending German attack on Russia. After Rudolf Hess's flight to England the British Government at once warned Moscow of Germany's military plans, citing a number of concrete facts and details which clearly revealed Hitler's intentions. Moscow failed completely to react to this warning. On June 7 Anthony Eden decided to summon Cripps to London for "several days." Downing Street had already decided to recall him altogether. Cripps, having gone to Moscow full of hope, was now utterly dissatisfied with the results of his mission. The London *Times*, in an editorial of June 13, 1941, commented:

Cripps had been sent to Moscow in the hope that his appointment would bring about a closer understanding between Great Britain and Soviet Russia. This hope, through no fault of the Ambassador himself, has not been fulfilled. Sir Stafford Cripps has been received in Moscow courteously but without enthusiasm. At no time has he been admitted to the confidence of the Soviet Commissar of Foreign Affairs.

No sooner had Cripps arrived in London than Russo-German relations took a catastrophic turn. Two weeks later he flew back to the Soviet capital, this time as the Ambassador of Russia's ally.

Anthony Eden's speech to the Commons on June 24, 1941, shed much light on Anglo-Russian relations during the recent critical months. Hitler, in declaring war, had accused the Soviet Government of secret collaboration with Britain and of joint intrigues against Germany. In his reply to this allegation Eden stated:

At every phase in the recent history of the development of Anglo-Soviet relations we were always retarded by the attention paid by the Soviet Union to the observance of their pact with Germany . . . On every occasion it became clear to us that the Soviet Government was not prepared to negotiate, in view of their anxiety not to introduce any embarrassment into their relations with Germany.

## 2. *Moscow and Washington*

Soviet Russia's relations with the United States ran roughly parallel with those with Great Britain. Yet there were essential differences.

Toward the United States the Soviet Government had no reason to maintain that studied passivity which marked its attitude toward Britain. Obviously favoring and even supporting Great Britain, the United States was at the same time, industrially speaking, the most powerful neutral power. Throughout the critical months in the European struggle Soviet Russia continued to maintain close contact with American economy. Berlin could have no objection to the Narkomindel policy. Accordingly, Russian trade, which had reached its low point with Great Britain, was expanding in the case of the United States. Next to Germany, America had become Russia's most important market for both exports and imports.

Another significant factor which affected Russo-American relations profoundly was the question of Japan and of the entire Pacific, an area which was rapidly coming to hold a place in world affairs no less crucial than the struggle in Europe. London viewed Russia primarily as a neighbor of Germany. The United States laid more emphasis on Russia's role as a Pacific power.

Finally, the difference between American and British policies toward Russia turned out what one may term a matter of "principle." Toward European countries Britain's policy was always opportunistic, determined exclusively by practical considerations. Distant America could afford to be more doctrinaire, more insistent on principle.

Prior to the outbreak of hostilities between Germany and the Soviets Russo-American relations had not been very cordial. They had performed a number of zigzags, improving briefly and then taking a turn for the worse. These zigzags coincided with the fluctuations in Russo-British relations.

Relations between Washington and Moscow had reached their nadir during the Soviet-Finnish War and continued at this low level for a considerable period. The "moral

embargo," proclaimed by the State Department on December 2, 1939, continued in force even after the main reason for it—Russian bombardment of Finnish cities and towns—had ceased to exist. The United States Ambassador, Steinhardt, left Moscow in May, 1940, and was absent from his post during four critical months.

As early as June the State Department denied to Amtorg, the Russian trading agency in the United States, licenses to export various machines and other equipment purchased in the United States, amounting to \$5,000,000. On June 12 the Soviet Ambassador, Constantine Oumansky, protested vigorously to Secretary Hull against the "embargo on the shipment of nearly all kinds of American goods to the Soviet Union."<sup>11</sup> Under other circumstances the Narkomindel would have reacted by severing all trade relations with the United States. For the moment, however, America was the only important market, except Germany, in which Russia could do business, and Russia needed American equipment, particularly machinery of all sorts.

Already bad, relations between Washington and Moscow deteriorated still further after the Soviets had annexed the Baltic States. Washington's attitude was reiterated by Under Secretary Sumner Welles in a declaration of July 23. Baltic funds in the United States were "frozen," and more than a dozen ships then in American ports were detained.

Shortly before the formal incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union and at a time when those countries were already ruled by governments completely subservient to Moscow, the Soviet State Bank had bought up all the gold of their central banks, paying for it with paper rubles. By this means Moscow had acquired a legal claim to the gold reserves of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania on deposit in the United States, reserves which Washington also "froze." All this laid the ground for a sharp conflict between Soviet Russia and the United States.

The State Department continued to recognize the Washington legations of the three Baltic States. Although on Moscow's request Washington reluctantly withdrew its diplomatic and consular staffs from the Baltic States, the

State Department looked askance at attempts to form Baltic "Governments-in-Exile." This was a clear indication that President Roosevelt sought to avoid a further deterioration in the relations between the United States and Russia.

The same cautious policy was followed by the State Department in renewing the Russo-American trade agreement for one year. First concluded on August 4, 1937, this agreement was subject to renewal each year. In 1940 it was again extended, this time with significant reservations on the part of Moscow. According to the original agreement, Russia was obliged to buy annually from the United States goods valued at not less than \$40,000,000. Upon its renewal in 1940, Anastasius Mikoyan, Commissar of Foreign Trade, declared on behalf of the Soviet Government that "if restrictions imposed by the Government of the United States should render it difficult for Soviet economic organizations to satisfy their needs in the United States, it may be impossible for these organizations to carry out their intentions. The Government of the U. S. S. R. is therefore not in a position at the present time to guarantee the above-mentioned value of its purchases in the United States."

Summarizing the difficulties in Russo-American relations in his speech of August 1, 1940, Molotov stated quite bluntly:

I am not going to dwell upon our relations with the United States of America, if only for the reason that there is nothing good to be said on this matter. The fact that the United States authorities are illegally withholding gold quite recently bought by our State Bank from the banks of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia had provoked the most energetic protest on our part. We can only remind the United States Government, as well as the British Government which adopted the same attitude, that they bear responsibility for these illegal acts.

The Soviet Foreign Commissar also made cryptic reference to "covetous amateurs in the United States who camouflage their imperialist plans under the banner of 'anxiety' for the interests of the 'Western Hemisphere.' "

Soon after Molotov's speech relations between Soviet Russia and the United States took a marked turn for the better. This shift coincided with Japan's rapprochement with Germany and with her increasing activity in South-eastern Asia. Japanese plans for a "Greater Asia," by now quite clear, prompted Washington to seek a better understanding with Moscow. Ambassador Steinhardt returned to Moscow, and Constantine Oumansky became a more frequent visitor to the State Department. Several American tankers carrying aviation gasoline were permitted to sail for Vladivostok. Washington also granted to the Soviet trading agency licenses to ship to Russia a number of machines and other types of equipment previously purchased.<sup>12</sup>

The improvement in Russo-American relations coincided with a number of British *démarches* in Moscow, *démarches* which were concerned with the reopening of the Burma Road and with Cripps's attempts to effect a far-reaching understanding with the Soviet Government.

By the end of October it had become clear both in Washington and in London that an understanding with Russia was not yet feasible. The United States and Great Britain had hoped that the conclusion of the military alliance between Japan and Germany would force Russia to take more decisive steps against both her neighbors. When it became clear that this was a miscalculation, Russo-American relations again cooled off. The question of American-Soviet trade and of its effect upon the British blockade now complicated the picture again. Japan had already begun to utilize Soviet railroads for supplying Germany, while Russia now undertook to deliver large exports to her Western neighbor. This situation called forth a British protest to Washington, coupled with the request that Russian imports from the United States be strictly controlled and considerably curtailed.

The State Department was between two fires. Ambassador Oumansky was continually assuring the United States Government that all goods purchased by Amtorg were intended strictly for Soviet use, while London kept insisting



that, while this might be literally true, imports from America were releasing Soviet-made products for export to Germany. The Soviet Ambassador also complained vigorously against the licensing system which Washington applied to exports to Russia, alleging that it placed Russia in a less favored position than Great Britain, in violation of the "most-favored-nation" clause in the Russo-American trade agreement.

In late November, 1940, the Narkomindel granted to the State Department the right to establish a consulate in Vladivostok; Germany had received this right two weeks previously. The purpose was to give the United States an opportunity to check upon Moscow's claims, in view of the lively trade between Japan and Germany across Russia. But even this concession brought with it no improvement in Russo-American relations. In attempting to steer a middle course between Russia and Britain, the State Department from time to time granted minor concessions, but these were far from satisfying Russia.

The second significant zigzag in Russian-American relations coincided with the outbreak of the first serious conflict between Russia and Germany in the Balkans. On January 21, 1941, the State Department made a friendly gesture toward Moscow by repealing the "moral embargo." In a letter to Ambassador Oumansky Sumner Welles declared that "the policies set forth in the statement [of December 2, 1939] are no longer applicable to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics."<sup>13</sup>

In the middle of January, 1941, the State Department received information from obviously authentic sources that Germany had decided to attack Russia in June. The Acting Secretary of State, Sumner Welles, at once informed Constantine Oumansky of the alarming information in the possession of the United States Government. The Soviet Ambassador asked for no details and treated the entire matter rather lightly. He did, however, inform Moscow of the State Department's warning.\*

\* In relating this startling bit of information in the *Ladies' Home Journal* of July, 1942, Forrest Davis and Ernest K. Lindley, whose source was apparently the White House itself,

Licensing of Soviet imports from the United States continued and Washington retained the right to control and even curtail its exports to the Soviets. Russia was not among the countries which the United States supplied or intended to supply with airplanes and other aeronautical equipment. Despite the removal of the "moral embargo," there was no real improvement in the relations between the two governments, and minor questions, such as the detention of the Baltic ships, constantly fanned the flames of dissension. In this connection Oumansky's representations went unheeded. Under Secretary Welles pointed to the growing needs of American war industry as an obstacle to the solution of this problem, Oumansky was dissatisfied with Welles's explanations. The Russo-American rapprochement remained in the air for several more months.

Washington now adopted another restrictive measure against Soviet Russia. Early in 1941 foreign propaganda materials weighing 200,000 pounds were excluded from the mails by the United States General Post Office. Included among these were German, Italian, and Japanese as well as Soviet newspapers. On March 1 Oumansky complained to the State Department that even Russian newspapers addressed to the Embassy in Washington were being withheld by the Post Office as propaganda matter.

It was, however, only after Russia was already at war with Germany that the ban on Soviet newspapers was lifted.

In March, 1941, Russian-American relations again improved somewhat. Moscow and Washington were now pursuing analogous policies in the Balkans, particularly in Yugoslavia. Matsuoka's visit to Europe again brought the Japanese menace to the fore. At a press conference of March 25 Sumner Welles referred to Soviet Russia as a "Great Power" and commended Moscow on its "comprehensive neutrality." Oumansky won Washington's consent "in principle" to increase considerably American ex-

added that Oumansky hastened to impart Mr. Welles's warning to the German Chargé d'Affaires in Washington, Hans Thomsen. Mr. Oumansky, however, from Moscow categorically denied the veracity of this statement

ports to Russia. On April 7 Secretary Hull expressed satisfaction with the Russo-Yugoslav Pact, pointing at the same time to the German threat against Russia. But even this determined effort to reach an understanding remained without result.

On March 20 when the Japanese Foreign Minister, Matsuoka, was already on his way to Moscow and Berlin, Oumansky, on the instructions of his government, asked Sumner Welles for confirmation of the information the latter had given him in January regarding Germany's military plans against Russia. Mr. Welles made a confirmatory reply. He also told the Soviet Ambassador that Matsuoka's trip West was primarily for the purpose of concluding an agreement with Moscow so that Japan might secure her rear for her forthcoming conflict with the United States. It was the view of the State Department, Welles said, that Russia should not conclude a pact with Japan but keep the latter in a tense state of indecision. This, as a matter of fact, was a hint that Washington was ready to come to an understanding with Moscow in the Pacific.

The Soviet Government, however, ignored this suggestion and after prolonged negotiations signed a neutrality treaty with Japan which, although not at all what Tokyo had expected, precluded a Russo-American understanding against Japan.<sup>14</sup>

After Moscow signed her Nonaggression Pact with Japan in April, 1941, Russo-American relations took a turn for the worse, for the pact was generally interpreted as an anti-American move. At the beginning of May Washington again stopped the shipment to Russia of machines and technical equipment worth several million dollars; on May 14 Oumansky protested to Cordell Hull against the detention of a consignment of wool and skins bought by Russian agents in Argentina and reloaded by the Amtorg Trading Corporation on a Swedish steamer which was due to depart from San Francisco for Russia.<sup>15</sup>

The understanding between Welles and Oumansky for increasing American exports to the Soviet Union remained only on paper. As if to make matters even worse, rumors began now to circulate about new negotiations between

Moscow and Berlin, for the purpose of bringing those countries into more intimate coöperation. The accompanying decline in Russian-American understanding was obvious in the spring of 1941. This mood of estrangement still prevailed down to June 22. Then Hitler's attack on Russia led both countries to the road of coöperation and alliance, at least as far as the war with Germany was concerned.

## CHAPTER XII

### NEGOTIATIONS AND PACT WITH JAPAN

#### I *Toward a Nonaggression Pact*

IN the middle of the year 1940 Japan's foreign policy underwent a radical shift, a shift which was at once reflected in her relations with Soviet Russia.

In May, Holland was overrun by German troops. In June France fell, and the French fleet ceased to play a role in world politics. The Dutch East Indies, perhaps the richest territory in all Asia, were apparently left ownerless, almost as defenseless as French Indo-China. To an inquiry by Tokyo as to German interest in Holland's Asiatic possessions, Hitler, who had been constantly searching for a way to reconcile Japan to his pact with Russia, gave a favorable reply. Somewhat later he also lent Japan his diplomatic assistance in Vichy when she moved to occupy the French possessions in East Asia.

These two dates mark a turning point in Japan's orientation. Both China and her principal supporter, Russia, were now relegated to a minor position in Japanese plans for expansion, and all Tokyo's efforts were directed toward rapid advance into Southeast Asia and toward the Indian Ocean. Hitherto a vague dream, the "New Order in East Asia" was now in the center of Japanese policy. Accordingly, England and America now became the chief obstacles and main enemies.

With Japan now wholly preoccupied with her move to the South, her relations with Russia became more or less normal for the first time in many years. As early as August 1, 1940, Molotov was able to state: "Recently our relations have tended toward normalization to a certain extent. It can be recognized that there are certain general indications of a desire on the part of Japan to improve her relations with the Soviet Union."

With Hitler's armies firmly quartered in Paris, Ger-

many's star now shone brighter than ever. Japanese diplomacy, ever alert to seize upon favorable opportunities, now saw in an alliance with Berlin the means for opening up far-reaching perspectives in the Pacific. In turn Germany looked on Japan as the only great naval power which could lend her effective aid in the struggle against the British Empire and against the threat of American involvement in the struggle. For both countries the moment seemed opportune to give active meaning to the Triple Alliance signed four years previously under the lofty-sounding title of the Anti-Comintern Pact.

The Anti-Comintern Pact, as we have seen, had not been considered a military alliance. It did not obligate the signatories to concerted military action. All attempts made by Italy and Germany at the beginning of 1939 to transform it into a binding military alliance had been vigorously rebuffed by Tokyo. Japan wanted a free hand in planning its own strategy. By 1940 an alliance between the three Anti-Comintern powers could be only military in character. Although the Anti-Comintern Pact had been directed against Russia, for all three of its members "enemy number one" was now Great Britain. Accordingly, the new pact was bound to differ radically from the now outworn pact of 1936.

One of the back-stage authors of the new Triple Alliance was Herr Stahmer, Hitler's personal envoy, who made two visits to Tokyo during 1940. On his second trip, in August, to put the final touches to the Three-Power Pact, Stahmer stopped off at Moscow to prepare the Kremlin for the approaching conclusion of the new alliance. To placate Russia, he informed the Foreign Commissariat that a special paragraph safeguarding Soviet interests would be included in the pact, and that it should in no way affect Russia's relations with any of the three contracting parties. At the same time he inquired as to the conditions on which the Soviet Government would agree to establish genuinely friendly relations with Japan.

Japan was now proposing to divide up China with the Soviets. As her share Russia was to receive the entire province of Sinkiang, including of course Outer Mongolia. The

Kremlin, according to certain reports, demanded the annulment of certain fundamental provisions of the Portsmouth Treaty,\* the liquidation of Japanese concessions in Northern Sakhalin, the demilitarization of Southern Sakhalin (although Russia was willing to leave this part of the island to the Japanese), the "neutralization" of the Chinese Eastern Railway, and finally the evacuation of all troops and the demilitarization of the northern frontiers of Korea and Manchuria.<sup>1</sup>

These conditions were, of course, not accepted by Japan. Yet the mere fact that Stalin's government was ready to negotiate and was even setting forth conditions for an agreement was construed in Tokyo as a favorable omen. Japan had reason to fear that, after all the bitter conflicts between the two countries, the Kremlin, which was only too well aware of Japan's far-reaching aims, would decline to enter into any negotiations, would shun all promises, all support to the German-Japanese combination, and might even take advantage of the moment when Japan was involved in the South to strike a blow at her. To be sure, these were not the aims of the Soviet Government, for motives analogous to those which had prompted Stalin to conclude his pact with Germany. He sought to avoid an immediate conflict with Japan, which might receive German support. On the other hand, Russia did not want to become a military ally of England and America. The Soviet policy of strict isolation also applied to the Far East. Hence Russia decided to enter into negotiations with Japan, and the Foreign Commissariat informed the German emissary that, whether or not her conditions were accepted, she intended to maintain her neutrality in the Far East in case Japan became involved in war with other powers.

Stahmer arrived in Tokyo at the beginning of September. Japan, counting on German support at Vichy, at once issued an ultimatum to French Indo-China. On September 17 the Japanese Crown Council decided to enter the Triple Alliance, and on September 23 Nipponese troops were

\* According to the Portsmouth Treaty of 1905 Russia recognized Korea, Kwantung, and Port Arthur, as being in the Japanese sphere.

marching into Indo-China. The ceremonial signing of the pact took place in Berlin on September 27. Under its terms the three signatories were now obligated to take joint military action against any state with which any one of them might become involved in war; the pact was obviously aimed at the United States. Neither the authors of the pact nor their official press tried to conceal the true meaning of the Triple Alliance. The effect of the pact on their relations with Russia was carefully formulated in paragraph 5: "Germany, Italy, and Japan affirm that the aforesaid terms do not in any way affect the political status which exists at present as between each contracting party and Soviet Russia."

This paragraph did not guarantee Russia against war with any of the three states. In general, it offered no protection for her interests. It was merely included as an assurance to the Kremlin that the Triple Alliance was not aimed at Russia and that each of the signatories was free to pursue its own independent policy toward her. Thus, Japan subsequently remained at peace with Russia even after the latter became involved in war with both Germany and Italy.

Two important points connected with the signing of the Three-Power Pact remained unpublished at the time. To begin with, Tokyo demanded of Hitler a "guarantee" of Soviet neutrality in case Japan became involved in a military conflict. For Tokyo, which was feverishly preparing for war with the United States, this guarantee was of vital importance. During his stay in Moscow Stahmer took up this question with the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, and the Soviet Government readily promised neutrality.<sup>2</sup> On September 30, three days after the signing of the Three-Power Pact, *Pravda* announced that the Soviet Government had had advance knowledge of the pact, and that Russia saw in it no reason for departing from her policy of neutrality. "In so far as it depends on us," the editorial stated, "the policy of Soviet neutrality is and will remain unchanged."<sup>3</sup>

Another secret clause of the Three-Power Pact had to do with the question of aggression. Who was to determine



whether the power that became involved in a military conflict with one of the three contracting parties was the aggressor? Japan, for instance, was obligated to fight on the side of Germany and Italy in case the United States committed an act of aggression against one or both of them. But it was left entirely to Tokyo to determine whether the United States was the aggressor. In other words the pact was not to go into force automatically and Japan was left free to chart her political course.

At first the pact was indeed little more than a scrap of paper. It was a moral demonstration against England and the United States, rather than a military alliance. In form it was vague and could be interpreted variously to suit various necessities. It allowed Germany, on the one hand, to make every effort to entice Soviet Russia into the Triple Alliance, while, on the other, she could also woo Russia's neighbors with the obvious design of forming an anti-Soviet bloc. The entire plan for the new order in the world, mapped out in Hitler's private study, was at that moment rather vague and sketchy, indicating no definite boundaries for the respective spheres of influence in Europe and Asia.\* If all these facts are taken into consideration, the Three-Power Pact at the time of its conclusion was little more than an attempt to browbeat Britain and the United States.

In most of the Foreign Offices the Three-Power Pact was interpreted as heralding a switch in Soviet policy. Everyone now expected a far-reaching understanding between Russia and Japan; rumor had it that an agreement "would be signed any day," whereby the Soviet would agree to withdraw its aid from China. The Soviet Embassy in London informed the British Government that Russia did not contemplate ceasing to aid China. The official Tass statement of December 4, 1940, on the agreement between Japan and the puppet Nanking government of Wang-Tsin Wei cited the declaration of Smetanin, Soviet Ambassador to Japan, to the Tokyo Foreign Office: "The Soviet Govern-

\* It was generally assumed that the Japanese sphere was to include territories to the east of India.

ment deems it necessary to declare that the Soviet Union's relations with China remain unchanged."<sup>4</sup>

Soon after, the new road from Russia to China, which had taken the Soviets three years to build, was completed. This road, leading from Ulan Ude on the Siberian Railway to Ulan Bator Khoto and thence by camel track to Ning-sia and Lanchow, was of strategic significance and could also be used for the transportation of American goods. By the end of 1940 several thousand trucks were plying this road.<sup>5</sup>

On December 11, 1940, Russia and China signed the first part of a trade agreement, providing for the exchange of Russian military equipment for Chinese wool.<sup>6</sup> The second half of the agreement was signed in January, 1941. At the beginning of February 150 Chinese pilots who had been trained in Moscow left for China.<sup>7</sup>

Nevertheless, Russo-Japanese relations were still improving, particularly since Tokyo still hoped for an agreement with Russia which would end once and for all the latter's contact with the Chiang Kai-shek government. Prior to his departure from Moscow Ambassador Togo gave a grand reception attended, for the first time in many years, by People's Commissars Molotov, Mikoyan, and others.<sup>8</sup> The Japanese Foreign Minister, Yôsuke Matsuoka, in turn appeared at the reception of the Soviet Embassy in Tokyo on the occasion of the anniversary of the October Revolution.<sup>9</sup> He also informed the Japanese Diet that Russia and Japan had "found a common basis" for an understanding and that "relations between the two countries were very good."<sup>10</sup> He reiterated this assurance at a conference of Japanese governors; quoting Stalin he declared that a conflict between Russia and Japan would mean "that our countries are pulling the chestnuts out of the fire for other countries."<sup>11</sup> In the meantime Moscow began negotiations with Thailand, which was under direct Japanese influence, for the establishment of normal diplomatic and commercial relations, negotiations which were successfully completed on March 12. Russo-Japanese trade negotiations, which had been broken off in 1940, were resumed

in February, 1941, and led in a few months to the agreement of June 11. On January 20, 1941, the Soviet Government prolonged the Japanese fishing leases for another year and in February a special commission was appointed to work out an all-round agreement on the fisheries.

These partial successes and mutual declarations of friendship did not form the core of Russo-Japanese relations at this time. The two countries had altogether different aims in view. Through direct negotiation Japan hoped to achieve Russia's diplomatic retreat and to weaken her in the Far East. In July, 1940, Ambassador Togo had already proposed a neutrality pact, but the Soviet Government, accepting the offer in principle, did not agree with the conditions put forth by Japan. Thereupon, the new Japanese Ambassador, Gen. Yoshitsugu Tatekawa, arriving at Moscow at the end of October, proposed a nonaggression pact—"on the pattern of the Soviet-German Pact"—a pact providing for a setting up of spheres of influence in the Far East.<sup>12</sup> The Soviet Government, however, preferred a simple neutrality pact. Negotiations between Tatekawa and the Narkomindel went on for several months without appreciable result. It was this failure which, among other reasons, finally prompted the Japanese Foreign Minister to make his much publicized trip to Europe.

With the Soviet-German agreement of 1939 still fresh in their minds, the Japanese hoped that through clever diplomacy they might be able to induce the Kremlin to agree to a division of "spheres of interests" in Asia, too. Tokyo was ready to make substantial concessions in order to divert Moscow's attention from its differences with Japan and thereby to receive a free hand in the execution of its own political plans. What Tokyo failed to understand was that the Russo-German pattern could not be repeated in the Far East. In Europe it had meant the partition of a hostile Poland; in the Far East it would have meant sacrificing Nationalist China, Russia's only ally in that quarter of the globe. Moreover, by the winter of 1940 Moscow was already disappointed with the results of the Russo-German Pact.

Japan still nourished strong hopes of achieving her aim

in the end. In Tokyo some people believed that Russia should be bought off at any price. The newspaper *Asahi* went so far as to advise a revision of the Portsmouth Treaty because "one must remember the coming war with the United States."<sup>13</sup> The Japanese diplomacy strove mainly to direct Russian attention toward the Southwest, toward Afghanistan and India, offering in compensation certain of China's outlying territories. In preparing for a war with the British Empire, Tokyo hoped to find an ally in the Soviet Government. In many respects Japanese policy toward Russia was analogous to that of Germany, which was also constantly hoping to divert Moscow's attention from the Balkans and the Black Sea toward the Middle East and India.

## 2. *"When the West Wind Blows"*

As the negotiations between Molotov and Tatekawa in the winter months of 1940-41 progressed slowly, the Japanese Foreign Minister decided to make his trip to Berlin and Russia. Matsuoka's policy was based primarily upon a far-reaching military alliance with Germany as a means of waging war against Britain and the United States. As we have seen, Russian neutrality—at a minimum—was a necessary prerequisite for Japan's "march to the south." Matsuoka held that Japan must at once exploit the European war on behalf of her expansionist aims in South-eastern Asia and in the Pacific. So fixed was this idea in his mind, that one of the walls of his house, it was said, bore the inscription, "When the west wind blows, fallen leaves are piled up in the East."

Matsuoka reached Moscow on March 22, 1941, loaded down with valuable presents. Stalin received a thirteenth-century hand-embroidered screen depicting an ancient hunting scene. Molotov was presented with a lacquered box, the lid of which was decorated with a Japanese shrine in gold and silver. Both were rare examples of Japanese art.<sup>14</sup>

Although the Japanese Foreign Minister was received by both Stalin and Molotov, he postponed all important ne-

gotiations until his return trip from Berlin. From Moscow he went on to Germany and Italy, where he was received with great pomp and ceremony. Matsuoka's meeting with Hitler was brief, and their conversations were by no means as smooth as stated in the official communiqués. Hitler categorically demanded an immediate declaration of war by Japan against England, while the Japanese Minister insisted that he could not give a positive reply as he had no official instructions from his government on this matter. Japan was obviously apprehensive of Russia's position despite Hitler's assurances that she would remain neutral. At least once during their conversations Hitler fell into one of his typical fits of hysteria, stormed ferociously, and shrieked that "England must be defeated." According to Col. Yatsuji Nagai, who was present at the conversations, Matsuoka "is also a person who becomes heated in conversation and an interesting scene arose . . ." <sup>15</sup> Hitler insistently urged Matsuoka to conclude a pact with Russia, promising, in turn, to press on with the war against England in coöperation with Japan.

The Foreign Minister returned to Moscow at the beginning of April. He now had six conferences with Molotov, in some of which Stalin joined. It soon became clear as it had during the long negotiations with Tatekawa, that Matsuoka's terms were not acceptable to Stalin, and that the Soviet demands could not be accepted by Japan. For the latter, particularly in the light of Matsuoka's policy, an understanding with Russia was of prime importance. This explains the great length of the conversations and Matsuoka's persistence. When it was certain that a pact of the type sought by the Japanese was not feasible, Stalin countered with the offer of a limited treaty of neutrality. Soviet neutrality in case Japan became involved in war with Britain and the United States was what Japan sought above all, but the value of the treaty proposed by Stalin, without basic concessions and without supplementary terms, seemed rather dubious to Matsuoka. The Soviet Government would go no further. It also refused to come to an agreement on China. <sup>16</sup> But under the circumstances, Matsuoka could only accept Stalin's offer.

The treaty signed by Russia and Japan on Easter Sunday, April 13, 1941, unlike the Soviet treaties with Germany and Yugoslavia, was one of *neutrality* rather than *nonaggression* and *friendship* and lacked the usual clause concerning "mutual consultation." It had three main points

1. Both contracting parties undertake to maintain peaceful and friendly relations between them and mutually respect the territorial integrity and inviolability of the other contracting party.

2. Should one of the contracting parties become the object of hostilities on the part of one or several third powers, the other contracting party will observe neutrality throughout the duration of the conflict.

3. The present pact comes into force from the day of its ratification by both contracting parties and remains valid for five years.

Attached to the pact was also a "Frontier Declaration" to the effect that "the two countries solemnly declare that the U. S. S. R. pledges itself to respect the territorial integrity and inviolability of Manchukuo,\* and Japan pledges herself to respect the territorial integrity of the Mongolian People's Republic." One unpublished point in the agreement provided for the withdrawal of troops to a distance from the Russo-Japanese frontier. The Soviets had almost a million soldiers concentrated on that border.

For many years all attempts on the part of the Soviets to reach a similar understanding had been consistently rebuffed by Tokyo. To underline the importance of the event, the signing in Moscow was celebrated with all pomp and splendor. No sooner had Molotov and Matsuoka affixed their signatures, in Molotov's private quarters in the Kremlin, than tables were set and the celebration begun with the participation of many Soviet and Japanese dignitaries. Between glasses of champagne the chief actors made political toasts, with Stalin, who, as those present noted, drank a specially concocted "reddish liquor," in the leading role. He drank toasts to the health of the Mikado, to the people of Japan, to the Japanese Premier, to Prince

\* This declaration on Manchukuo was contrary to the policies of Great Britain and the United States and also to the League of Nation's resolution passed with the approval of Litvinov.

Konoye, to Ambassador Tatekawa, and, of course, to Matsuoka. To this the Japanese Foreign Minister replied, "If you drink to the health of the Emperor, then my capacity is unlimited." But Matsuoka was worried by the weakness of the pact just signed, which in essence offered no real guarantee of Russia's neutrality.

"I will carry out my obligations fully," Matsuoka said, turning to Stalin, "or if I cannot, I will commit hara-kiri and order that my head be sent to you." He made a suggestive movement with his hand, as though cutting his own throat. "But if you do not carry out your promises, I shall come for your head."

"The Soviet people still need my head," replied Stalin, "and the Japanese need yours, that's why we cannot chop off each other's head." Obviously referring to Stalin's relations with the Red Army, Matsuoka remarked boldly:

"Mr. Stalin, these military men who came with me always think how it would be best to attack your territory, but I think that it is well that we politicians should control them and this is the essence of our labors. What do you think, Mr. Stalin?"

Stalin laughed and nodded his head approvingly. Then he turned to one of the Japanese naval officers and said:

"You are a naval officer, I see. America is now building many ships, but she has few experienced seamen . . ." They touched glasses. At this point Matsuoka interrupted, saying, "Mr. Stalin, these military men are shorter than the Russians, but their soul is bigger. It is because of their soul that they were victorious in the Russo-Japanese War."

The interpreter became embarrassed and hesitated whether or not to translate this remark, but Matsuoka insisted that he do so. Smiling, Stalin replied:

"This is the first time that I have met such an open-hearted, honest, and direct diplomat as you."<sup>17</sup>

Matsuoka left Moscow the same day. Before his departure, as a sign of great friendship, Stalin appeared at the station to see him off, embraced him three times and said: "We *shall* remain friends." At this moment the German Ambassador, Count von der Schulenburg, approached them. Stalin remarked to him: "We too *should* remain friends."

Matsuoka's departure by no means ended the exchange of pleasantries between him and Stalin. En route he sent one telegram after another, as though hoping through flattery to reinforce the very weak agreement he was bringing home. He recalled the "scenes of informal congratulations" which, he said, "will remain one of the happiest moments in my life." "I swear again," he telegraphed Molotov, "that my motto will be: I remain true to my word to the very end."

At first the outside world, even the public opinion of Japan and the government of China, failed to comprehend the true essence of the pact. The Chinese Communists, fearing treachery on Moscow's part, never even referred to it.<sup>18</sup> Berlin, on the other hand, welcomed the "Easter Agreement," particularly the Soviet declaration concerning Manchukuo, which meant that Russia had defied the decision of the League of Nations. The German press, however, failed to comment upon the glaring shortcomings of the pact from the viewpoint of Japan and Germany.<sup>19</sup>

### 3. *Soviet-Japanese Neutrality*

Japan first interpreted the Moscow pact as a sign that all differences with Russia were settled. The press commented in unison on this severe blow to England, America, and China, and asserted that "everything is now ready for the struggle with Britain and America." Some newspapers went as far as to envisage a conflict within two months, with Japan, Italy, Germany, and Russia aligned against the Anglo-American bloc and China.

"This war," wrote the newspaper *Miyako*, "might come before June."<sup>20</sup> The influential *Nichi-Nichi* stated that "Russia had really become a quasi-member of the Axis camp and, by tacit understanding with her partners, has received a free hand in Central Asia and in the Near East to expand the Soviet bloc."<sup>21</sup>

Soon a reaction set in. Chungking reported that during its negotiations with Matsuoka Moscow had assured the Chiang Kai-shek government that its policy of aid to China would be continued and that the Russo-Japanese



agreement had made no change in this respect.<sup>22</sup> Europe also placed little value on the pact and Secretary of State Cordell Hull, speaking for the United States, declared soberly and correctly that "the significance of the pact could be overestimated. The agreement would seem to be descriptive of a situation which had in effect existed between the two countries for some time past."<sup>23</sup>

After a brief moment of intoxication, Tokyo too awoke to the reality of the situation. From all sides there were now insistent demands, linked to the ratification of the pact, for improving it and supplementing it, particularly on points most essential to Japan. The newspaper *Hochi*, the most fervent exponent of the German-Japanese alliance, published five conditions without which the Russo-Japanese Pact would be meaningless. These were:

1. Reinforcement and renewal of agreements now in force [which presumably referred to the Treaty of Portsmouth which Russia wanted modified as the price of the nonaggression Pact.]
2. Conclusion of a trade agreement.
3. Prohibition of Russian maneuvers in Japan's sphere of influence.
4. Abandonment by the Soviets of aid to General Chiang Kai-shek.
5. Decision on the respective spheres of influence of Japan, Germany, and Russia in Asia and Europe.

*Hochi* also attacked the Moscow government openly for refusing to enter the Axis outright and gambling on its eventually exhausting itself.<sup>24</sup> Perhaps the greatest blow to Matsuoka was the failure of the Japanese authorities to distribute hundreds of thousands of printed copies of the speech which he made on his return to Tokyo.<sup>25</sup>

From this point on Germany again took over the initiative in the negotiations with Moscow.\* But Tokyo kept on discussing with the Russians a number of questions of mutual interest. Japan still hoped that Berlin would eventually induce Moscow to grant substantial concessions.

In May and June, 1941, Moscow and Tokyo reached a new understanding on certain frontier questions. On June

\* See Chapter XIII, § 4

11 they signed two trade agreements, providing for a trade turnover of 30,000,000 yen per year. They also regulated the transit of goods across Siberia between Japan and Germany. Moscow reopened its consulate in Shanghai with a large staff. Sea-borne traffic between Shanghai and Vladivostok was resumed, and a part of the Red Army stationed on the borders of Manchuria was withdrawn. On June 17 an agreement was also reached for the demarcation of the Mongolian-Manchurian frontier.

Germany's declaration of war on Russia gave rise to great confusion in Japan. Authoritative Japanese circles believed until the very last minute that Berlin would succeed in breaking down Soviet resistance without an armed conflict; that Japan would soon be able to join Germany in a war against England. The Japanese Government, to be sure, was aware of the real state of affairs. As Matsuoka put it on June 23: "Something must be wrong with the brains of those who are surprised."<sup>26</sup> But an entirely new situation was now created, and Japanese diplomacy had again entered a blind alley.

For many years Japan had been waiting for Russia to be entangled in a major European war. All her hopes of expansion in Asia, all the dreams of her leaders over recent decades, had been built on the long-awaited moment when the Soviet would be involved in a conflict against a coalition of powers. At last the moment had arrived. But in the confused situation of 1941 Japan could not take immediate advantage of it. Not that she had any scruples regarding the neutrality treaty concluded with Moscow only two months previously! To be sure, in order to cope with all eventualities, the Tokyo government now acted in a truly Japanese manner. Matsuoka, who had promised Stalin his head in case of Japanese aggression against Russia, resigned, and the scrap of paper he had signed in Moscow would not have been a deterrent to the Japanese militarists. But with each passing week the United States and Britain were increasing their pressure on Japan. Washington clamped an export embargo on trade with Japan and "froze" all Japanese funds in the United States. To all intents and purposes Japan was blockaded.

It was utterly impossible for Tokyo to reach an understanding with Britain and the United States, for this could have been only at the cost of a retreat in China. War with Russia, on the other hand, was also not feasible, since the blockade actually created difficulties for Japan's war industry. Japanese public opinion was puzzled. After so many waverings Japan was at last ready to join forces with Germany, yet now her hands were once more tied and she was forced to remain neutral. "A certain sense of confusion," wrote the influential *Asabi*, "could not be prevented from creeping into our foreign policy."

At the end of August Hitler met Mussolini on the Russian front. Their conference was devoted mainly to a discussion of Japan and the Pacific. It was clear that Hitler's plan of conquest was far behind schedule and that he would have to postpone the war against England and America. To pacify the Japanese Government, Hitler and Mussolini informed Tokyo that their plan in the war against Russia was to reach the Leningrad-Moscow-Kharkov line. Then an exhausted and hungry Russia "will no longer be a threat." They also said that Germany and Italy were interested in Europe only.<sup>27</sup>

Another month passed. Although the Germans now held large sections of Russian territory, the decisive moment so eagerly awaited by Japan was not yet in sight. At the end of October voices were raised in Tokyo, urging Germany to put an end to her conflict with Russia and to concentrate all her energies for a simultaneous attack upon England and the United States. In Tokyo's view, Russia was now too exhausted to start a war in the Far East for a long time. If Hitler was still fighting in Russia, it was purely for German reasons having nothing in common with a joint action with Japan. The political editor of *Hochi*, Yoshitaro Shimizu, wrote that the war with Russia had lasted long enough, that Germany was wasting material and men needed for the war with England. He advised an immediate peace between the two countries and urged Germany to concentrate all her forces for an attack upon Suez and the Near East.

It may be said [wrote Mr. Shimizu] that, in a way, relations of nonaggression now exist between the two nations [Germany and Russia], and in an atmosphere in which, after crossing swords, they are expressing admiration for each other's valor and fighting power, a state of nonaggression is not wholly impossible of realization.

If such a state of nonaggression could be achieved, the Siberian Railroad would again represent a most important link between Japan and Germany.

The official Domei news agency echoed Shimizu on October 8: "The Axis Powers should terminate the war with Russia to conserve German resources for an assault on Great Britain," for otherwise "Japan will be left alone to face the hostility of Britain and perhaps of the United States."

As a result of all these difficulties and confusions, to say nothing of the relations with the United States, the Konoye government fell on October 16, 1941. He was replaced by General Tojo, who, a month later, having been convinced of the stability of the German front in Russia, sent off the Japanese Fleet to make its surprise attack against Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Thus Japan began her war against the United States and Britain with Russia in the role of neutral.

Relations between Russia and Japan during 1940-41, particularly so far as the neutrality pact was concerned, had not been to Soviet advantage. For Russia it had been merely a continuation in the Far East of her policy of shunning alliances with potential allies. Moscow was still pursuing the policy of the "third power", in this case, the third power was "socialist Russia and nationally-oppressed China," struggling against Japanese aggression as well as against British-American capitalism. Russia's refusal to conclude a pact with Japan would not automatically mean a declaration of war; whether or not Soviet Russia was going to fight Japan, her pact facilitated the task of the great aggressor of the Pacific, and created tension with Russia's future allies. All in all, Russia had not been a gainer by this policy.

Far Eastern events of 1942 showed that Japan's cautious policy toward the Russian Far East was due not so much to her neutrality agreement with Russia as to the conclusion that only thus would she be able to carry on war at one and the same time against England, the United States, and China.

The fact that Russia, on the basis of this agreement, withdrew some of her forces from the Manchurian border made it easier for Japan to score victories in the Pacific in the first months of the war. Conquering and growing in strength, Japan was each week becoming a greater menace to Russia, while the latter's real or potential allies were suffering severe losses. For Russia the ominous situation in the Far East in 1942 was in many respects analogous to the European situation in the spring of 1941: after a pact of nonaggression she was menaced by aggression on the part of her co-signatory.

Soviet neutrality in the Far East was, however, of a different character from its neutrality in Europe following the conclusion of the Russo-German Pact in 1939. It was a neutrality in the narrow sense of the word minus economic collaboration or favorable political propaganda. Several months after the neutrality treaty was concluded, Tokyo protested to Moscow against the shipment of American goods through Vladivostok; Molotov, in turn, protested against this "unfriendly act" on the part of Japan. After this diplomatic exchange between these two neutral powers the United States Maritime Commission decided, on October 22, 1941, to discontinue the shipment of materials to the U. S. S. R. by way of the Pacific.

In the middle of November, 1941, a serious incident occurred on the Manchurian border and for a time threatened to result in a Russo-Japanese military clash. Then Japan attacked Pearl Harbor and the Soviet press, quite openly pointed at Japan as the aggressor. *Pravda* published an editorial in which this chief organ of the Russian Communist party envisaged the creation of a military bloc in the Pacific of Great Britain, the United States, and China; "Japan," concluded the editorial, "will undoubtedly suffer a defeat."

On February 26, 1942, the Soviet Government sequestered all Japanese holdings in Soviet territory and placed them under control of a Commissar for Alien Property. This order came after two days of increasingly bitter radio broadcasts against Japan and was aimed primarily at the Japanese concessions on Sakhalin Island which could make an excellent aerial base against Vladivostok.<sup>28</sup> Early in the fall of 1941 all water routes in the Vladivostok region were mined by the Soviets.

The unfriendly relations between Russia and Japan were further underscored by *Pravda* on the occasion of the first anniversary of the Russo-Japanese agreement on neutrality. Although indicating that this agreement justified itself, *Pravda* nevertheless stated: "It is important that the Japanese military-fascist cliques, who are drunk with their military successes, should realize that all their prattle about a war of aggression in the north will harm Japan above all."<sup>29</sup>

The situation in the Far East during the entire year of 1942 was extremely tense. More than once it seemed as though the outbreak of war was only a question of hours. There were persistent rumors that Japan was poised for an attack upon Russia, particularly after Japan's fantastic victories in the months of March and April, 1942. But the growing military might of the United States in the Pacific, the determined resistance of Australia, and the reverses which the Japanese fleet suffered in the Coral Sea and Midway battles as well as in the Solomon Islands made it very dangerous for Tokyo to expand its theater of war to the north.

## CHAPTER XIII

### *THE INEVITABLE WAR*

#### *I. Basic Antagonisms*

**C**OLLABORATION with Soviet Russia, which was for Berlin a policy of "diplomatic expediency," was never popular with the German National Socialists, nurtured and grown strong on hatred of Communism. The entire concept of National Socialism had evolved as a force opposed to Marxism, particularly to its Communist brand. During its "heroic struggle" for power National Socialism had reared thousands of German youth in the fanatical belief that a merciless and unrelenting struggle against Russian and German Communism was its mission and duty. The first tenet of the National Socialist catechism was: Collaborate with any and everyone, except with World Communism. Now the young National Socialists of that formative period had grown to maturity, had become the masters of the land, and, to a considerable extent, the molders of German "public opinion."

When the Soviet-German Pact was but eight months old, Erich Koch, one of Hitler's close collaborators and Gauleiter for East Prussia, told a number of people privately that "the attitude [of the National Socialist party] toward the pact is changing rapidly. When the Moor has done his task," he said, paraphrasing Schiller, "the Moor may go."<sup>1</sup> Hitler's chief strength as absolute Führer lay in his uncanny ability to interpret correctly and to anticipate the wishes and the moods of his followers. "It was with heavy heart," Hitler subsequently asserted, "that I sent my Minister, Von Ribbentrop, to Moscow."\* For Hitler it was

\* In the fall of 1940, shortly before the outbreak of Russo-German hostilities, Hitler told Duke Carl of Württemberg (Father Odo) "Only once have I allied myself with the devil—with Stalin—when I signed the agreement with him in August, 1939. I must confess that for me personally this was the saddest day of my life, as many people thought that I had acted treacherously towards my own principles . . . I did this only for the

axiomatic that the Russo-German combination would last not one day longer than was absolutely necessary.

Such was the pervading spirit behind Hitler's foreign policy. At the outbreak of the new European war there were three large land armies in Europe. Of these, the French Army was crushed by the German legions in June, 1940, leaving the Red Army the sole continental power able to challenge Germany's mastery of Europe. Many years before the war it was clear to Hitler that, so long as a large foreign army existed on the continent, Germany could never rest secure in her conquests. Two decades previously he had formulated this basic thesis in what he pompously referred to as his "political testament":

Never permit two Continental Powers to arise in Europe. Should any attempt be made to organize a second military power on the German frontier, by the creation of a state which may become a military power, with the prospect of aggression against Germany in view, such an event confers on Germany not only the right but the duty to prevent by every means, including military, the creation of such a state, and to crush it, if created.<sup>2</sup>

Giving a practical application to this thesis when Germany was already involved in war, Hitler reiterated that "the German Reich and its allies represent militarily, economically, and morally a force greater than any possible coalition or combination of powers . . . No state must exceed us in armaments."<sup>3</sup> This was again an obvious reference to Russia and the Red Army. Hitler feared lest the Red Army eventually become a danger to the Third Reich, such as it had actually threatened to become in the summer of 1940. He could not forgive the Soviet Government for having concentrated large forces on its western frontier from June to September, 1940, when, after the defeat of France, he was ready to strike a blitz blow at England and thus speedily terminate the war. He could not forget that, at a decisive moment, or what seemed to him a decisive moment, when he was about to force Britain to her knees,

greatness of Germany. All the world will forgive me when I bring Stalin back in chains to Berlin" (*Times*, London, November 4, 1940, and June 23, 1941.)



he was obliged to divert strong units of the Luftwaffe to the East. Fourteen months later, when the European situation had changed radically, he referred again to this critical situation:

We had only three divisions in the East, while there were already twenty-two Russian divisions on the other side of the frontier. All this was in August and September when it was clear that we would need the Air Force for the decision in the West, and that that would be impossible when in the East another enemy was preparing to attack.<sup>4</sup>

The destruction of the Red Army would have made Hitler's domination of Europe secure. It would also have started Germany well on her way toward realizing her dream of a colonial empire, since Russia was to have been for the Germans what India has been for the British. Indeed, the huge country in the East was considered by Germany a mere subject of other powers rather than an active force in international affairs, and it was Hitler's aim to conquer and weaken the "savage and uncultured Slavs."

It is still our task [he said to Hermann Rauschning] to shatter for all time the menacing hordes of the Pan-Slav empire. . . . Let us not forget that the Slav East is more fertile than all the rest of Europe. We must meet this danger, which threatens to engulf all Europe. . . .

We are obliged to depopulate as part of our mission of preserving the German population. We shall have to develop a technique of depopulation, I mean the removal of entire racial units. And that is what I intend to carry out—that, roughly, is my task. Nature is cruel, therefore, we too may be cruel. If I can send the flower of the German nation into the hell of war without the smallest pity for the spilling of precious German blood, then surely I have the right to remove millions of an inferior race that breeds like vermin! And by "remove" I don't necessarily mean destroy, I shall simply take systematic measures to dam their great natural fertility. For example, I shall keep their men and women separated for years. Do you remember the falling birth-rate of the World War? Why should we not do quite consciously and through a number of years what was at that time merely the inevitable consequence of the long war? There are many ways, systematical and comparatively painless or at any rate bloodless, of causing undesirable races to die out.<sup>5</sup>

War with Russia, particularly with Communist Russia, was to Hitler *The War*—not just one of those inevitable European conflicts, but the struggle of which he had been dreaming for two decades, for which he had been preparing the German people during the six eventful years of his rule, the great conflict which was to assure Germany's hegemony over Europe "for a thousand years."

For many years Germany had been getting ready for this great war. Preparations now took a very practical turn. In the fall of 1940 special courses were organized in Berlin and Prague to train anti-Communist administrators. In Prague some of the instructors were Russian *émigré* monarchists who were looked on as experts in the struggle against Communism. They were busy putting out leaflets, magazines, and other anti-Communist propaganda. Some of them who worked in the office of the "Protector of Bohemia" were even informed that they had been designated for special work in Odessa after its capture by Germany. Alfred Rosenberg, the National Socialist "expert" on Russian affairs, extended the work of the "White Ruthenian" organizations in Prague. The notorious General Biskupski began the formation of "Junker Divisions," while General Woicekowski was appointed chief of a special "destructive corps."<sup>6</sup> Similarly, in Western Poland, which was now under German occupation, Rosenberg began to organize special Ukrainian legions; some Ukrainians were even granted "full citizenship" by their National Socialist masters, who thus elevated them to the rank of *Volksdeutsche*.<sup>7</sup>

The entire winter of 1940-41 was devoted by Hitler to his anti-Soviet preparations. So much certainty was there of an imminent Russo-German war that Hitler's Rumanian ally, General Antonescu, appointed prefects in February, 1941, for Soviet-occupied Bessarabia.<sup>8</sup> At the beginning of March there were constant rumors in Helsinki about an "interesting offer which Hitler had made to the Finns regarding a combined Finnish-German attack upon Russia." Even the date was mentioned: May or June, 1941.<sup>9</sup> Field Marshal Goering's statement to a group of neutral diplomats that war with Russia would commence in June, 1941,

spread rapidly in all the capitals of Europe. Finally, in March Hitler himself told the Yugoslav Regent, Prince Paul, that "war with Russia is imminent."<sup>10</sup>

## 2. *No Defeat of England Without Crushing the Soviets*

Although the war against Russia was decided on in principle, it was one thing to decide and something quite different to carry out the decision. It would have seemed wise to let the Russian war wait until England had been brought to her knees. If, despite sober reasoning and meticulous calculations, Hitler made up his mind to tackle the Russian colossus in the midst of a conflict with England, he was plainly driven to this decision by extremely grave considerations.

The struggle with England had lasted much longer than Hitler had reckoned on. Meanwhile, British war industry had been expanding and across the Atlantic the United States was beginning the conversion of its great industries to war needs. After the Lease-Lend Bill was introduced in Congress, Hitler understood that, even if it were possible to cope with his European opponents, he now faced an uphill fight against a world coalition which included two great naval powers. Without another naval power to counterbalance the United States, in other words, without active Japanese intervention on his side, he would be unable to destroy the British Empire.

The Triple Alliance, which, when concluded on September 27, 1940, had been merely a military and political demonstration, was now beginning to acquire ever greater significance. All of Germany's hopes were now staked on it. The ruling circles of Japan were, in turn, ready to gamble on war with England and the United States. They realized all too well that never again would history offer a similar opportunity; if Great Britain won this war, all their dreams of an "East Asiatic Co-Prosperity Sphere" would go up in smoke; Germany's defeat meant, in point of fact, a total defeat for Japan.

Japan could not launch forth on a war with Great Brit-

ain and the United States so long as the Russian "puzzle" was not solved in one way or another. To carry on war simultaneously with Russia in the North and with the two mightiest sea powers over the wide expanses of the Pacific Ocean was unthinkable. War against England in alliance with Germany was possible only if Tokyo were assured of Soviet neutrality. Thus, in 1940, during the negotiations for the Triple Alliance, Tokyo was insistent that Hitler "guarantee Russia's neutrality"; Hitler in turn undertook to reassure Japan against a Soviet attack. How could Germany actually guarantee Soviet neutrality in case Japan went to war against both Great Britain and the United States? To be sure, Japan had a military pact with Germany, obligating the latter to come to her aid in case an act of aggression was committed against her. Yet the value of pacts had fallen very low by then, and no country was more responsible for this situation than Japan, which in this respect had been the forerunner of both Germany and Italy. Could Japan gamble with her future on the strength of a scrap of paper bearing Hitler's signature?

As one way out of her dilemma, Japan offered Russia a nonaggression pact. For more than four months the Japanese Ambassador to Moscow, General Tatekawa, had been negotiating with the Narkomindel for a comprehensive agreement which would assure his country of security in the North while it was engaged in a war to the South. All Japan could extract from the Narkomindel was a neutrality pact, which was far from settling Japan's major problem. Subsequently Hitler boasted of having been the peacemaker and the true friend of Russia, who had influenced Matsuoka to sign this treaty.

The Russo-Japanese Treaty of April 13, 1941, was very limited in scope and contained no serious concessions by the Soviets. Quite the contrary, Moscow emphasized her intention to continue aiding China. Japan needed effective security; this she could achieve only by inducing Russia, voluntarily or through force, to coördinate her foreign policy with that of Berlin and Tokyo. Again the whole problem reduced itself to whether Russia would become an

active member of the Triple Alliance. The only other alternative was to paralyze Russia's economy and armed forces through a German attack.

To join the Triple Alliance would have meant for Russia accepting complete subservience to Berlin in foreign policy, demobilizing the Red Army, and subordinating her war industries to German needs. Part or all of the Ukraine would have become a German protectorate. The key economic positions in Russia would have been taken over by German "technicians" and "experts." In short, the Russian State would have been reduced to the status of a Rumania or a Slovakia, only on a more grandiose scale.

In this refusal to join the Axis Russia's national interests for once coincided with those of the Communist party. By joining the Triple Alliance Russia would have lost her independence not only as a state but as a *Communist* state. Against this eventuality, against the perpetual fear of an "imperialist intervention," Russia had been steeling herself for two decades, driving her war industry at top speed for the last five years at the expense of all other branches of Soviet economy, amassing great quantities of tanks, guns, airplanes, and other armaments. Was she now to lay all these at the feet of the conqueror and without a fight? Stalin could not accept the role of an Antonescu, of a Moscow Gauleiter. Even the most extreme of Russian appeasers now realized that they had reached a point beyond which they could not go. No one in the Kremlin could hope any longer for the prolongation of the "breathing spell," for this would certainly have meant self-destruction for the Russian state as well as for its ruling political party. The two-year "breathing spell," bought so dearly by the Kremlin in August, 1939, was up. War was at hand.

Such was the paradoxical situation as it had developed by May, 1941. To fight England, Germany needed Japan's active aid. Japan, in turn, needed the certainty of Soviet neutrality; to assure this neutrality, Germany found herself at war with Russia. Beginning as a chapter in the Anglo-German War, the Russo-German conflict soon came to mark a new epoch in the new World War.

The fate of Japan, which now felt strong and secure enough to open military operations, was thus decided and with it the fate of the United States and perhaps of the American continent. From its onset this war had expanded according to its own immanent law; no large power could escape involvement. All desperate attempts to evade this fatal struggle brought merely a precarious delay, a postponement bought dearly. The war which had begun on the borders of Poland was now bringing into motion the Russian colossus and the entire Western Hemisphere.

### 3. *Soviet Policy Prior to the Outbreak of the War*

The most difficult, perhaps the most tragic period in Soviet foreign policy was the six or seven months preceding the outbreak of military hostilities, the period which lay between Molotov's visit to Berlin and June 22, 1941. It can be said without exaggeration that since Lenin first seized power in 1917 the Soviet regime had not faced a situation as difficult as this.

By the close of 1940 Stalin's Nonaggression Pact with Hitler was worth little more than the paper it was written on. Berlin was forming anti-Soviet alliances, giving anti-Soviet "guarantees" of borders, and systematically eliminating Soviet influence in one country after another. The clause of "mutual consultation" was not observed by Germany; Berlin no longer asked Moscow's opinion and consistently disregarded Soviet interests. In the Balkans and in Finland Germany was the first to violate its agreement on the "spheres of interest." Although German diplomacy and its controlled press still maintained a tone of cordiality toward the Soviets, German leaders no longer were able to conceal the fact that the spear-point of their policy was directed against Russia.

Germany was constantly advancing. Russian diplomacy, based on the fictions of the pact, was constantly retreating. The belief held by the Kremlin that the August Pact might succeed in postponing indefinitely the fatal day of combat was another source of weakness. The policy of systematically avoiding any conflict with Germany, a pol-

icy which had at first contributed effectively to Russia's bloodless victories and her substantial territorial gains, now doomed the Soviets to passivity. Berlin, on the other hand, went on rattling the saber with ever greater ferocity and determination. As a result, the diplomatic conflicts during the first half of 1941 culminated in a series of German victories and of Soviet retreats.

The Russians, obviously worried, were unable or unwilling to take decisive countermeasures. Molotov discontinued his periodic reports on foreign affairs. After his speech of August 1, 1940, he made no public statement for the next eleven months and down to the fatal day of June 22. Stalin too was silent. The long speech he had delivered on May 5 to a graduating class of officers was never published. In March and April, 1941, meetings were held all over Russia where reports were submitted about the last conference of the Communist party. But none of these reports mentioned the foreign situation. The Soviet press no longer contained reviews of Soviet foreign policy; it limited itself to minor problems. For the Soviet people and the outside world Moscow's already complicated foreign policy was now still more confused.

The most interested observers of Russian irresolution and retreat were the countries of Southeastern Europe, where Russo-German rivalry had been rampant since the fall of 1940. Whenever Germany was poised to move in this corner of Europe, the prospective victim sought support in Moscow. Thus it had been with Bulgaria, with Yugoslavia, and in part with Turkey. To all inquiries as to whether, if they resisted Germany, they could count on Soviet aid, Moscow invariably replied: Do not give in, fight but do not expect military help from Russia. It seemed almost as though Moscow were enjoying its little joke at the expense of the Balkan States. But the joke cost dearly. Soviet prestige sank low in the Balkans. In Hungary, for instance, where it had reached its apex in July, 1940, it was almost at the vanishing point by late October.<sup>11</sup> As the Turks were now saying ironically, even if Germany attacked the Dardanelles, the Soviets "would probably express displeasure more strongly than they had

over the occupation of Bulgaria; if the Germans reached India, the Russians would express even keener displeasure, but would not do anything about it. Russia would be glad to see Turkey put up a stiff fight, but would not be expected to help."<sup>12</sup> On February 12 the *Sofia Zora* wrote with bitterness that "to ask Bulgaria to oppose Germany is like asking her to commit suicide."

Official Soviet reaction to Berlin's aggressions in the Balkans consisted of Tass communiqués or of cautious denials, which were, however, very thoughtful of German sensibilities. Between January and June, 1941, such communiqués and denials were legion. Despite persistent rumors and even factual reports that German "tourists" and "technicians" were swamping Bulgaria, Tass began its official communiqués with the words, "if it is true that German troops have entered Bulgaria . . ." The official Narkomindel reaction to the Bulgar-Turkish Pact was in the form of a denial: "the Soviet Government did not consent . . ." Hungary's attack on Yugoslavia as Germany's ally merely called forth the statement that "the Soviet Government does not approve . . ." Finally, Moscow informed the world that all that could be expected of her in case of German aggression against Turkey was benevolent neutrality.

Each veiled anti-German declaration was followed immediately by some appeasing move on the part of the Narkomindel, some assurance of loyalty to the August Pact. In November, 1940, the Soviet Government recognized Germany's "protectorate" over Slovakia; this was followed soon by the recognition of the puppet state and the conclusion of a trade agreement. On January 10, 1941, simultaneously with the publication of the Tass communiqué on German penetration of Bulgaria, Moscow published a number of new agreements with Germany, including one delimiting the Russo-German frontier in former Lithuania, two for the evacuation of Germans from the Baltic, one for the evacuation of Russians and Lithuanians from the German-occupied territory, and a property settlement in connection with these evacuations. On the same day Moscow and Berlin signed their third and last



trade agreement; its figures and other details were never made public, but they caused much satisfaction in Berlin. According to official German statements, it exceeded in scope all previous trade agreements between the two countries; it involved billions of marks and "the biggest deal in wheat ever recorded." Again the German press wrote ironically about the impotence and ineffectiveness of the British blockade. "Both countries," ran the official comments, "are extremely satisfied with the development of their economic relations, which will come up to all expectations."<sup>13</sup>

The Soviet Government scrupulously fulfilled all its contractual obligations toward Germany. Nevertheless Russo-German relations continued to deteriorate. By the end of March, 1941, and during the German-Yugoslav War they took, for a moment, the form of an open dispute.

On the eve of Matsuoka's trip to Europe to confer with Hitler and Mussolini, the Soviet Government hastily issued a decree forbidding the transport of foreign arms and ammunition over Russian territory.\* This measure was clearly aimed at Germany. So was the Russo-Japanese Neutrality Treaty of April 13, which the Narkomindel interpreted as another safeguard. At the same time *Pravda* published an article commenting on Russia's refusal to join the Triple Alliance.

Tokyo and Berlin were not wasting time. Their object was to make the Soviet Union a "junior partner" of the Axis, whether she joined the Triple Alliance formally or not. A grand-scale military demonstration, obviously designed to browbeat Russia, now began. German trains and trucks loaded with ammunition and thousands of soldiers moved toward the far-stretched Soviet borders. They came from Germany proper and from the Balkans, where they had wound up their victorious campaign. From all Balkan and Danubian capitals there were persistent rumors of German motorized divisions approaching the Soviet frontier. German planes were making frequent flights over Russian territory, some of them penetrating as much as

\* Not published until April 30, 1941.

100 miles beyond the frontier. Between January and June 21, 1941, there were 324 violations of Soviet territory. Moscow protested to Berlin in secret notes in January, March, April, and June. The third note cited 80 cases of Soviet territory being violated by German planes over a period of three weeks, from March 27 to April 19. The fourth note, which was presented on June 21, a few hours before Germany launched its attack upon the Soviets, listed 180 cases which had occurred between April 19 and June 19.<sup>14</sup>

#### 4. *Last Attempts to Reach an Understanding*

By the close of April the Balkans were firmly in Germany's grip. Russo-German relations were nearing a climax. Ruling circles close to Stalin were thoroughly dissatisfied with the policy of diplomatic pinpricks which failed to improve Russia's position and merely increased Berlin's irritation. In particular, Soviet military leaders, headed by Marshal Semion Timoshenko, Commissar of Defense, were clamoring for a determined Soviet policy, instead of the diplomatic hide-and-seek which they regarded as dangerous and degrading. They clearly perceived the dangers of the situation.

Nevertheless, Stalin resolved on one more attempt at rapprochement with Berlin. He had no illusions regarding the ultimate results of the negotiations, which would serve Hitler merely as a smoke screen for intensified military preparations. Information received daily from various sources left no doubt as to Germany's immediate plans. The new negotiations were merely an eleventh-hour attempt to turn the European clock back to the happy days of 1939.

In a speech of May 4, 1941, Hitler mentioned all the great and lesser powers which were ready to embrace the "New Order," particularly lauding Hungary and Rumania, but he omitted all reference to Russia. Times had changed! Two years previously Hitler's failure to mention Russia in a similar oration had been generally construed as

presaging a Russo-German rapprochement. Now this very studied omission carried an ominous message for the Soviets.

On the following day, May 5, Joseph Stalin, the chief Soviet exponent of Russo-German collaboration, became Premier of the government. This was a signal of his readiness to talk business with Hitler and also, according to the traditions of Russian Communism, an indication that the Soviets considered themselves in the midst of a war situation. If a decisive war was imminent, then Stalin had to be President of the Council of People's Commissars of the U. S. S. R., just as his predecessor, Lenin, had been Premier during the war period of 1918-21.

For five weeks the new Russo-German talks continued in profound secrecy.<sup>15</sup> Neither side presented clearly formulated demands. Germany merely asked for a "true and comprehensive alliance," for improved relations, mutual aid, and so forth. The Narkomindel was only too well aware of Berlin's true aims. But Stalin made a few new steps in order to ease the tension in Russo-German relations. On May 9 the Soviet Government withdrew recognition not only from the accredited diplomatic representatives of Norway and Yugoslavia (with the latter it had concluded a pact only one month previously) but also from the Belgian Government-in-Exile which still exercised power over the large Belgian Empire. On June 3 the Greek Envoy was added to Moscow's list of unwanted diplomats.

The Narkomindel did not even send an official to take leave of these Envoys when they left Moscow in the middle of June. Only representatives of Allied and of some neutral countries came to see them off.

On May 12 Tass reported that the Soviet Government, which had long refused to recognize the Iraq Government, had decided to establish normal diplomatic relations with it. Only a few weeks before Rashid Ali Galiani, supported and subsidized by Germany, had carried out a coup d'état and captured the Iraq Government. The Soviet explanation of its ostentatious pro-German act was that at the end of 1940 the Government of Iraq had proposed to the Soviet Government the establishment of normal diplomatic rela-

tions, coupled, however, at that time with a demand that Russia pronounce herself publicly in favor of the independence of all the Arab countries including Iraq. Moscow had refused this request. It was only on May 3, 1941, after the pro-German coup, that the Iraq Government had relinquished its demand. Such was Moscow's official explanation of its refusal to recognize the Iraq Government while it was still pro-British. This time both governments showed real speed. Iraq was officially recognized by Moscow on May 3; on the sixteenth the Soviet Minister at Ankara, Sergei Vinogradov, exchanged notes with the Iraq Minister providing for the establishment of diplomatic and consular relations.

This was obviously intended as evidence of Russia's good faith. For a brief period it seemed as though Berlin and Moscow had patched up their differences. In early June, 1941, the Berlin press wrote enthusiastically about the "excellent relations" between Russia and Germany and about the new agreements which had nearly been concluded.<sup>16</sup> This was pure bluff. Germany knew it, and so did the Russians. These gestures of appeasement were accompanied by systematic Soviet precautions. On May 17 all foreign diplomats in Moscow received a circular letter from the Narkomindel informing them that they might no longer travel in the Soviet border zones, including the Finnish frontier, all Black Sea ports, Baku, the Crimea, and certain Siberian districts.<sup>17</sup>

In the meantime the Red Army had begun large-scale maneuvers in the entire western zone, particularly in the Kiev, Odessa, and Leningrad military districts. The Baltic fleet was mobilizing. All roads leading to Rumania were mined. On the Lithuanian border bridges were destroyed and entire villages evacuated.<sup>18</sup> All Red Army leaves were cancelled. A large Soviet Army was being concentrated along the Russo-German frontier, and the civilian population was being evacuated from the border zone. At the beginning of June Moscow also began the evacuation of museums and scientific institutions.<sup>19</sup> At no time since 1914-18 had there been so many Russian troops concentrated between the Baltic and the Black Sea. Yet Tass re-

ported on May 8 that "no concentration of large military forces on the western frontiers of the U. S. S. R. is taking place or is contemplated."

Behind the cloak of negotiations Berlin too was making preparations for attack. Dr. Todt, the builder of the "Siegfried Line," made several trips to the East to inspect the fortifications on the Russo-German frontier. The German press in Poland urged the construction of air-raid shelters, particularly in the cities of Danzig, Cracow, and Warsaw. A number of cities even had blackout tests.<sup>20</sup>

It was generally estimated at the beginning of May that 25 to 30 German divisions were concentrated on the Russo-Rumanian frontier. Together with the Rumanian Army, they comprised a force of some 2,000,000 men. Total mobilization of the Rumanian Army was ordered on June 5 and was due to be completed by June 16; there was open talk in Bucharest that soon thereafter war with Russia would begin.<sup>21</sup> German diplomats in Madrid were declaring that Germany was going to supply the whole of Europe with Ukrainian bread.<sup>22</sup> The situation in Hungary and Rumania was particularly tense. In Budapest people were taking bets of five to one that the attack upon Russia would come within the next few weeks.<sup>23</sup>

From Berlin Soviet correspondents and diplomats were informing Moscow that according to persistent rumors a German attack upon Russia was set for the fourth Sunday in June—June 22. By the middle of May this information was an open secret in Berlin diplomatic circles, particularly after the spokesman of the German Foreign Office, Karl Boemer, blurted it out under the influence of alcohol at a reception arranged by the Bulgarian Legation on May 15. He was subsequently sentenced to two years in prison for this faux pas but the secret was out. Thus fully four weeks before the outbreak of the Russo-German War Moscow was aware even of the day set for the German attack.\*

\* Louis P. Lochner in the *New York Times*, June 6, 1942. Interesting details in this connection are also revealed by Pierre J. Huss in *The Fox We Face* (1942). According to Mr. Huss, Hitler had summoned a small conference of his nearest collaborators on December 15, 1940, calling upon them to prepare in all secrecy for a war on Russia. On May 15, 1941, Alfred Rosenberg told Boemer that Hitler had just appointed him chief of the future civil administration of Russia, as war was very near. This was the piece of information he gave away at the party given by the Bulgarian Legation.

### 5. *Diplomatic Preparations for War*

Germany opened her last diplomatic preparations for war against Russia by feeling out the ground for a peace with Great Britain, by increasing her pressure on Turkey, by reënforcing her military alliance with Finland, and by preparing Hungary and Rumania for the coming conflict.

The most important problem for Von Ribbentrop and Hitler was to find grounds for a neutralization of England or even for an understanding with her.

We have already seen how difficult it was for the orthodox, dyed-in-the-wool National Socialists to continue in the role of allies of Soviet Russia. Now the National Socialist party was faced with a prospect which was equally distasteful to all true party members; an alliance with Japan to crush Great Britain. Although this partnership was more palatable than the alliance with Communist Russia, still it was contrary to all political beliefs and ethnical concepts of Hitler's followers. England was the only country which they regarded as almost on a par with the German race. Hitlerism, which practiced and glorified expansion by force, could only pay homage to Britain's domination of India and to the great success of her colonial conquests. *Ein Herrenvolk!* Although at heart jealous of England, Hitler had at one time dreamed of an Anglo-German alliance against France and the rest of Europe, and perhaps against the world.\* This insensate dream was perhaps the weakest point in the otherwise perfect plans of this ruthless realist. Like the Kaiser before him, Hitler failed to understand that Great Britain could never side with the conqueror of Europe, regardless of his race or na-

\* The future historian of our era and also the future biographer of Hitler will read with great interest the Führer's self-revealing remarks made on April 1, 1939:

"I hope that all English people understand that we do not possess the slightest feeling of inferiority to the Britshers

. . . By whatever means Great Britain has acquired her colonial territories—and I know that they were those of force and often brutality—nevertheless I know full well that no other Empire has ever come into being in any other way and that in the final result it is not so much the methods that are taken into account and not the success of the methods as such but rather the general good that the methods yield. The Anglo-Saxon people has accomplished immeasurable colonizing work in the world, and for this work I have sincere admiration."

tionality. Thus, instead of an alliance with England Hitler had been forced to conclude the "distasteful alliance" with the Communists and then with the Japanese for the destruction of England.

During the first months of the European war Hitler periodically made public peace offers to Britain, and private emissaries of Berlin were constantly putting out peace feelers to London. The German Führer was prepared at any moment to betray his Nipponese ally and to sign a peace treaty with England, on his own terms. Had he achieved this aim, he could have turned to the East with a light heart.

England could not and would not accept Hitler's basic demand: German hegemony on the European continent. Thus, acting primarily in self-defense, "capitalist Britain" through her continued resistance also saved Communist Russia, just as the latter, also acting strictly in self-defense, by concentrating large forces on the German border in 1940, had diverted many units of the Luftwaffe to the East. At this juncture Rudolf Hess made his sensational flight to England on May 10, 1941. According to official Berlin statements, "Hess had illusions that it was possible to reach an understanding between Germany and England. He, more than anyone else, knew how sincere were the Führer's peace offers to England." It was Hess's *idée fixe*, Berlin asserted, that it was possible to persuade England to make peace with Germany.\*

An Anglo-German alliance as a substitute for the Triple Alliance—this was the international combination which Hess brought to London: a break with Japan and a concentration of all German forces and resources for the coming war with Russia! Hitler may have been skeptical of Hess's mission, but in any case he went out of his way to indicate his sympathy for the latter's "illusions."

On May 13 Germany suddenly discontinued her air raids

\* London denied officially that Rudolf Hess had come with a message from the German Government. The Minister of Labor, Bevin, however, stated that he did not believe that Hitler was unaware of Hess's trip; although the latter had no formal instructions, he had acted nevertheless with Hitler's knowledge. Stalin stated later that Hess had brought to London the proposal of a joint war against Russia.

on London after subjecting it to savage bombings during April and early May. At this time Von Papen approached the Turkish Foreign Minister, Saracoglu, with a request that he act as intermediary between England and Germany.<sup>24</sup> Berlin also stopped the shipment of arms to the pro-German Iraq Government, and did nothing to check England's campaign against Ali al Galiani. At the end of May, when the British were engaged in military conflict with the French in Syria, Hitler remained completely aloof. When Goebbels published an article in the *Völkischer Beobachter* of June 13, discussing among other things the possibility of a German landing on the British Isles, the entire issue was suppressed. At this time Berlin also denied officially rumors that fresh German troops were to be sent to the Near East through Russia or through Turkey.<sup>25</sup>

At the beginning of June there were persistent rumors in Washington, too, about some sort of peace proposals that Germany had made to Britain. President Roosevelt therefore deemed it necessary to deny any possibility of peace negotiations in his official statement on June 7—"not even a tenth cousin of peace!"

Berlin had some hope that London would agree to adopt a passive attitude once Germany had attacked Soviet Russia, and that Hitler would thus be enabled to concentrate his entire might on the Soviet front. This hope was an illusion, perhaps the most fatal of all National Socialist illusions. As fast as German plans to attack Russia came into the hands of Anthony Eden, they were forwarded to Moscow through Ivan Maisky.

## 6 War!

On June 2, 1941, Hitler and Mussolini again met at the Brenner Pass, accompanied this time by representatives of their respective High Commands. It was one of their longest conferences. Moscow knew it was a war council, at which the strategy for an attack on Russia was mapped out. The war was decided upon in principle but it was left



to Germany to set the date for the commencement of hostilities.

The last-minute negotiations between Moscow and Berlin had struck a snag at the outset. A certain bitterness in tone had become noticeable.<sup>26</sup> As early as May 25, *Pravda* published a sharp item ostensibly directed against Finnish journalists, but in reality intended for Germany. In this item, *Pravda* branded as "political nonsense and an idiotic lie" a Berlin report in the Finnish newspaper, *Sanomat* that "there exists the possibility of the conclusion of a treaty providing for the lease of the Ukraine to Germany." On June 12 the Narkomindel published a lengthy document which was, on the surface, simply a denial of rumors of Russo-German disagreements. Actually it represented a query addressed publicly to the German Government as to its real aim and the real meaning of its actions. As usual, the release was in the form of a Tass communiqué\* replete with anti-British innuendos, including a personal attack on Sir Stafford Cripps:

Even before the arrival in London of the British Ambassador to the U. S. S. R., Cripps, and particularly after his arrival, the British and, in general, the foreign press began to disseminate rumors about the "proximity of war between the U. S. S. R. and Germany." According to these rumors:

First. Germany allegedly presented to the U. S. S. R. claims of a territorial and economic nature, and negotiations are now under way between Germany and the U. S. S. R. concerning the conclusion of a new, closer agreement between them.

Second. The U. S. S. R. allegedly rejected these claims in consequence of which Germany began concentrating her troops on the borders of the U. S. S. R. for the purpose of attacking the U. S. S. R.

Third. The Soviet Union, on its part, has allegedly begun intensive preparations for war with Germany and is concentrating troops at the latter's borders.

Despite the obviously nonsensical character of these rumors, responsible Moscow quarters still find it necessary, in view of the rumors, to authorize Tass to state that these rumors constitute clumsily concocted propaganda of forces hostile to the

\* "The Tass statement," Lozovsky subsequently said (*Pravda*, June 29, 1941), "was an attempt to force Germany to make it clear once and for all whether she intended to fulfill the pact."

U. S. S. R. and to Germany and interested in the further extension and unleashing of war.

Stripped of diplomatic verbiage the Tass communiqué in effect said to the German Government: "Britain has ample information regarding Germany's anti-Soviet plans. What have you to say to this?" Ostensibly denying these rumors, Tass further declared:

First. Germany did not present any claims to the U. S. S. R. and does not propose any new, clear agreement, in view of which no negotiations on this subject could have taken place.

Second. According to information at the disposal of the U. S. S. R., Germany is abiding by the provisions of the Soviet-German Pact of Nonaggression as steadfastly as is the Soviet Union, in view of which, in the opinion of Soviet quarters, rumors about Germany's intention to disrupt the pact and to undertake an attack upon the U. S. S. R. are devoid of any foundation, whereas the dispatching of German troops relieved from operations in the Balkans to the eastern and north-eastern districts of Germany, which is now taking place, is connected, it should be assumed, with other motives having no bearing on Soviet-German relations.

Third. The U. S. S. R., as follows from its peace policy, has abided and intends to abide by the provisions of the Soviet-German Nonaggression Pact, in view of which rumors to the effect that the U. S. S. R. is preparing for war with Germany are false and provocalional.

Tass referred to "rumors" of German concentration of troops on the Soviet border and to Russia's "intensive preparations for war" as "clumsily concocted propaganda." Nevertheless, in point 2 of its statement it informed the German Government that Moscow was only too well aware that Germany was dispatching troops to the Soviet frontier. In this historic communiqué it is also interesting to note the Narkomindel's complaint that although Russia had been making every effort to reach an understanding with Germany, Berlin, throughout the weeks of secret negotiations, had never proposed a clear agreement. However, point 4 was the most important, since it contained a veiled threat, an indirect hint that Russia was mobilizing and preparing for any eventuality:

The summer-camp drill of Red Army reservists now being held and forthcoming maneuvers, have no purpose other than the training of reservists and the checking of the work of railroad organizations, which is carried out every year, as is well known, in view of which to present these measures of the Red Army as inimical to Germany is, to say the least, absurd.

Berlin completely ignored this declaration.

It was only on June 13 or 14, when all necessary preparations for attack had been completed, that Berlin decided to decode its vague proposals. There is no doubt but that the most critical period in the Russo-German negotiations developed in the second half of June. First of all, Berlin demanded far-reaching rights in an "autonomous" Ukraine, in particular control over Ukrainian heavy industry, the core of the Soviet's entire war industry; secondly, the demobilization of the Red Army, and thirdly, the Soviet's agreement to work on military orders for Germany and to increase the export of Russian raw materials to Germany.\* Some sources reported that Hitler had demanded the restoration of Bessarabia to Rumania, the control of all shipyards in the Baltic, and a joint German-Japanese control over the Soviet fleet in the Pacific.<sup>27</sup> It is likely that in return Germany would offer Russia considerable prospects of expansion in the Middle East.

"Short of military coöperation," declared Germany, "Russia must occupy a position similar to that of Italy." Berlin was pressing Russia for "guarantees of good behavior," which would include a substantial degree of Russian disarmament as well as of German control within Russia.\*

The Japanese press already foresaw the elimination of Russia as a Great Power: "Heaven's help is about to de-

\* Italy, for instance, was obligated to supply Germany with goods "without balancing trade." That is, Germany did not have to pay for these goods for the duration of the war.

\* "All we require from Russia," declared a well-informed German official to the correspondent of the *New York Times*, "is that she become our complete ally. We are tired of the perpetual Russian threat and also of our inability to exploit Russian resources as completely as we should like. Short of military cooperation, Russia must occupy a position similar to that Italy now occupies. Then the infiltration of our experts and technicians would occur without any trouble. We would also know how to get guarantees that nothing would threaten us behind our backs if we were occupied elsewhere." (*New York Times*, June 15, 1941)

scend on Japan;" "the danger confronting the scheme is a Russian refusal, in which case German wishes run in the direction of the Ukraine."<sup>28</sup>

On June 17 Germany finally succeeded in concluding a "treaty of friendship" with Turkey. Isolated both in the Balkans and in the Black Sea, Britain's ally could no longer resist Hitler's pressure.

The German attack on Russia was now a question of days. Outwardly Moscow remained calm. Even on June 20 the Narkomindel officials were asking foreign diplomats: Why all this excitement?<sup>29</sup> A few evenings before the outbreak of the war Stalin, who does everything with premeditation, attended a performance of a modern comedy, *On the Steppes of the Ukraine*, thereby "pleasantly maintaining a Waterloo-eve atmosphere while giving visual evidence of his interest in the Ukraine."<sup>30</sup> Moreover, he came accompanied by practically the entire membership of the Political Bureau: Molotov, Mikoyan, Zhdanov, Khrushchov, the chief of the G. P. U., Beria, and Malenkov. The Soviet press reported it as an event of great political significance.\*

On June 22, at 4 A.M. (Berlin time), Von Ribbentrop summoned Dekanozov, the Soviet Ambassador, and informed him that Germany was at war with Soviet Russia. At 5.30 A.M. (Moscow time) Count von der Schulenburg arrived at Molotov's office with a similar declaration. But an hour before Molotov received the German declaration, the Luftwaffe was already bombing Russian towns and airdromes.

The German declaration of war, the text of which Von der Schulenburg presented to Molotov, was published in Germany as a personal declaration of Von Ribbentrop. A lengthy document, it reviewed in detail, of course from the German standpoint, Russo-German relations beginning with the conclusion of the Pact of August, 1939. Von

\* Walter Duranty (*The Kremlin and the People*, p. 190) relates that one or two nights before the invasion Molotov and Von der Schulenburg dined together and that "the atmosphere was cordial", "the Kremlin," Duranty continues, "is inclined to believe that Schulenburg was acting in good faith and was unaware of Hitler's intention to strike." It seems, however, more probable that both diplomats were trying to sound out and misinform each other.

Ribbentrop revealed for the first time how doubtful the German Government had been about the possibility of concluding a bona fide pact with a government which adhered to the Comintern. The history of Russo-German relations had justified those doubts, throughout the period of the pact Russia had been engaged in anti-German activities. He referred particularly to the anti-German activities of the various Communist parties in the Balkans, and on the basis of "incoming information" denounced at the same time the "growing collaboration between Soviet Russia and Britain" and the "somewhat discreet political coöperation between Russia and Britain."

Coming to the Yugoslav coup d'état, Von Ribbentrop accused Russia of having promised arms to Yugoslavia as early as November 19, 1940, and also of having acted in collusion with the United States, as evidenced by Sumner Welles's statement of April 6, 1941, approving Soviet policy in Yugoslavia. He also spoke of a previous Anglo-Soviet plan which allegedly aimed to draw Germany into war in the Balkans in the summer of 1941 against a coalition of Russia, Turkey, Greece, Yugoslavia, and England.

All Soviet protestations of friendship for Germany, said Von Ribbentrop, were a deliberate lie. They served merely as a cloak for the concentration of troops on Germany's borders; by June 22 there were 160 Soviet divisions stationed on the frontier. He referred to reconnaissance flights of Soviet airplanes over German territory.

"Germany has no intention of remaining inactive in the face of this grave threat to her Eastern frontier," were the concluding words of Von Ribbentrop's declaration of war. "The Führer has therefore ordered German forces to oppose this menace with all the might at their disposal."

On the same day Hitler also made a public declaration. Reviewing Soviet-German relations throughout the war, he said: "It was only with extreme difficulty that I brought myself, in August, 1939, to send my Foreign Minister to Moscow. I did this only from a sense of responsibility toward the German people."

He, too, cited instances of Soviet disloyalty toward Ger-

many. Because England counted on Soviet aid, he said, she consistently declined German proposals for peace; it was Sir Stafford Cripps's mission in going to Moscow to achieve a Russo-British understanding at all costs. When, in the spring of 1940, Germany had withdrawn her forces from the Soviet borders, the Red Army had moved closer and in threatening numbers. . . .

From August 1940 on I therefore considered it in the interests of the Reich no longer to permit our eastern provinces to remain unprotected in the face of this tremendous concentration of Bolshevik divisions . . .

German people! [he concluded] at this moment a march is taking place that, for its extent, compares with the greatest the world has ever seen. . . . I have decided today again to place the fate and future of the Reich and of our people in the hands of our soldiers. May God aid us especially in this fight!

On June 22 Vyacheslav Molotov, the Soviet Commissar of Foreign Affairs, likewise informed the Soviet people that the U. S. S. R. and Germany were at war and that German airplanes had already bombed the cities of Zhitomir, Kiev, Sevastopol, Kaunas, and others, causing more than 200 casualties in dead and wounded:

The attack on our country was perpetrated despite the fact that a treaty of nonaggression had been signed between the U. S. S. R. and Germany and despite the fact that the Soviet Government had most faithfully abided by all provisions of this treaty. During the entire period of the operation of this treaty the German Government could find no grounds for a single complaint against the U. S. S. R. as regards the observance of this treaty.

Only after an air attack had been made upon the U. S. S. R. did Von der Schulenburg present a declaration of war. "I replied," said Molotov, "that the German Government had made no demands upon the Soviet Union, that we had never violated the frontier, in spite of reports broadcast by the Rumanian radio." He termed a lie Hitler's accusation that Soviet planes had flown over German territory. Finally, referring to the Napoleonic invasion of

Russia and its outcome, he called upon the Soviet people to fight for a righteous cause:

The government calls upon you, citizens of the Soviet Union, to rally still more closely around the glorious Bolshevik party, around the Soviet Government, around our great leader, Comrade Stalin. Ours is a righteous cause. The enemy shall be defeated. Victory shall be ours!

It was only in the evening of June 21 that Hitler informed Rome that war with Russia would commence within a few hours. The Italian declaration of war followed a few hours later—on June 22 at 10 A. M.—but it took Rome six days to declare war on Russia in the name of Albania.

The Rumanian declaration was also made on June 22. It was accompanied by an order of General Antonescu to the Rumanian Army stating: "Free your oppressed brothers from the red yoke of Bolshevism: bring all Bessarabia, and the woods of Bukovina, your fields and meadows, back into the fatherland!"

The same day Slovakia, too, declared war on Soviet Russia. Hungary, however, first severed diplomatic relations with Moscow on June 24 and it was only on the 27th that she announced that a state of war existed between Hungary and Russia due to the latter's "indiscriminate air attacks upon Hungarian territory."

The greatest hesitancy in this series of declarations of war upon Russia was shown by Finland. On June 20, when the country was already in a feverish state of preparation, the trade-unions and the Finnish Social Democratic party together with a number of other organizations issued a proclamation demanding that Finland adhere to her neutrality. From all sides pressure was being exerted upon Helsinki to refrain from joining in the war on the side of Germany. But in his speech of June 22 Hitler said, referring to Finland: "German divisions . . . in coöperation with the heroes of Finnish freedom, under their Marshal, are protecting Finnish soil." On June 23, without waiting for a formal declaration of war on the part of Finland, Ger-

man bombers took off from Finnish territory and bombed the Kronstadt area. This was followed by infantry action on the 24th. On June 25 Helsinki, offering as a reason Soviet violation of Finnish territory, declared war upon Russia.

Two more governments indirectly dependent upon Berlin broke off relations with Russia without, however, declaring war upon her. On June 26 the Vichy Government of France received a demand from Germany that it sever its relations with Russia within two days. The government of Pétain, not without a great deal of apprehension, decided to comply and on the 28th severed diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, giving as a reason the fact that "the French Government has become convinced that diplomatic and consular agents of the Soviet in France are exercising an influence affecting the security of the state."

The Danish Government severed its relations with the Soviet Union on June 26, no doubt under similar pressure from Berlin. Russia was threatening the security of Denmark—so the Danish Government declared—as the Russo-Finnish War of 1939-40 had amply demonstrated.

Both France and Denmark permitted the recruiting of their nationals for service in the German Army.

It was during these fatal days of June 22 and 23 that the positions of the United States and Great Britain on Russia finally crystalized. On the 22nd Churchill made his speech over the radio where he gave Britain's position clearly and unequivocally:

We are resolved to destroy Hitler and every vestige of the Nazi regime. We will give whatever help we can to Russia and to the Russian people. We have offered to the Government of Soviet Russia any technical and economic assistance which is in our power and which is likely to be of service to it.

If Hitler thinks that his attack on Soviet Russia will cause the slightest slackening of effort in the great democracies, he is woefully mistaken. We shall strengthen and not weaken in our determination and in our resources.

The Russian danger is our danger . . .



The following day the Acting United States Secretary of State, Sumner Welles, released the declaration of the United States Government, prepared in advance, where he stated among other things:

In the opinion of this Government any defense against Hitlerism, any rallying of the forces opposing Hitlerism, from whatever source these forces may spring, will hasten the eventual downfall of the present German leaders, and will therefore redound to the benefit of our own defense and security.

Hitler's armies are today the chief danger of the Americas.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE RUSSO-GERMAN WAR

#### I. *Soviet Foreign Policy and the Russo-German War*

WHEN the cannon begin to roar the diplomats take a back seat. But, in a war waged by great coalitions, diplomacy, which regulates the relations within each bloc of allies, is of primary significance.

A history of Soviet foreign policy since the outbreak of Russo-German hostilities must be, of necessity, brief and even schematic. In general Russia's foreign policy from June 22, 1941, to October, 1942, must be analyzed against the background of gigantic military operations; in this respect the fifteen months of war fall into roughly five periods.

The first period lasted from June 22, 1941, until the middle of October, when, after four months of furious onslaught, the German armies, benefiting from their initial advantage, had succeeded in penetrating deep into Russian territory and in establishing a front on the Leningrad-Kalinin-Mozhaisk-Orel-Mariupol line. By this time they occupied the Baltic States, White Russia, and almost all of the Ukraine, including the key industrial areas of the Donets Basin.

The second period embraces some six weeks to two months—from about the middle of October until December 8, 1941—during which large-scale military operations were taking place on the central front. Although the Germans failed in their main objective—the occupation of Moscow—by inflicting upon the Red Army severe losses in men and material and by diverting all of Russia's energies to the Western front, they gave Japan the requisite assurances that her rear was secure and that she was now free to attack in the Pacific without fear of a blow from Soviet Russia. As soon as Japan struck at Pearl Harbor

Hitler announced the termination of military operations in Russia until spring.

During the third period—from December 7, 1941, until the end of April, 1942—the German forces were involved in a series of minor retreats. By March, 1942, the Red Army had regained about 12 per cent of the territory lost, and by the end of that month the front had become stabilized.

The fourth period, which began in the early part of May and lasted until June 27, 1942, witnessed the renewal of military operations, as yet local in character, particularly on the southern front, in the Crimea and in the Kharkov region. During May and June the Germans conquered the Kerch Peninsula as a jumping-off place for large-scale military operations which were to commence in the summer.

The fifth period coincides with the opening of the second year of the Russo-German War. On June 28, 1942, the Germans began a general advance on the Kursk-Kharkov line, in the direction of Stalingrad and the Caucasus.

During these sixteen months of war the direction of Russian military operations was entirely in Stalin's hands. Shortly before the outbreak of hostilities he had assumed the post of Chairman of the Soviet of Peoples' Commissars. On July 19, 1941, he displaced Marshal Timoshenko as Commissar of Defense, and at the same time became officially the Commander in Chief of the military forces, and as such solely responsible for Soviet strategy. Early in the war (on June 30, 1941) a Supreme Military Council was created consisting of five members of the Political Bureau of the Communist party—Stalin, Molotov, Beria, Voroshilov, and Malenkov—not one of whom was a military man, although Marshal Shaposhnikov was Stalin's adviser.

In the twentieth century the ideology of war, its social concepts, and its ultimate goal play an important role in every country at war. This was all the more true of Soviet Russia. For almost three decades—since 1914—acrimonious debate had been raging in Russia over the social character of wars in general and particularly of the coming

war. "Imperialist wars," "civil wars," "revolutionary" and "counterrevolutionary" wars, the socialist aims in a revolutionary war—all these questions were steadily debated in Soviet writings, in textbooks and newspapers, and at party conferences.

The moment Germany attacked the Soviet Union these discussions ceased overnight on orders from above. Russia's conflict with Germany was proclaimed not a revolutionary but a national (literally "Fatherland," *Otechestvennaya*) and defensive war. According to the Russian leaders, England too was now waging not an imperialist but a defensive war. The "just war" was the new slogan.

In the four public statements made by Stalin during the first fifteen months of war he did not once refer either to Communism or to "class tendencies" in the lands of his allies. He now distinguished merely between a war of liberation and a war of annexation:

Lenin differentiated between two kinds of war: a war of annexation, which means an unjust war, and a war for liberation, which means a just war. The Germans are now waging a war of annexation—an unjust war for the seizure of foreign territory and the conquest of other peoples. Therefore all honest peoples must rise up against these German invaders as against their enemies.<sup>1</sup>

. . . The Red Army is not waging a predatory imperialistic war but a patriotic war, a war of liberation, a just war. The Red Army's task is to liberate from the German invaders our Soviet territory, to liberate from the yoke of the German invaders the people of our villages and towns.<sup>2</sup>

. . . The freedom-loving peoples have joined together against German imperialism. They look to the heroic struggle which the people of our country are waging for their liberty and independence.<sup>3</sup>

The slogan of a national war of defense had political advantages both within the U. S. S. R. and in its relations with its allies. Abroad it cleared the way for Russia to enter into military alliances with the anti-German powers. Branding Germany now as the aggressor and exonerating Great Britain from all aims of conquest, this concept of a national war of defense became for the Soviet Union the

basis for its agreements with Great Britain and the United States and with all other anti-German powers. It also softened the shock for traditionally anti-Soviet elements in various countries, who looked askance at an "alliance with Communism" and who feared for the fate of Europe after Germany's defeat. Indeed, to allay this fear Stalin reverted again and again to this problem during the first months of war:

Sometimes the foreign press engages in prattle to the effect that the Red Army's aim is to . . . destroy the German State. This is a stupid lie and a senseless slander of the Red Army. The Red Army's aim is to drive the German forces of occupation from our country and to liberate Soviet soil from the invaders.<sup>4</sup>

As to internal German policy, Stalin said that it was for the German people to decide the fate of their regime, although the Soviet Union would naturally "welcome the overthrow of Hitler's gang." Similarly, in his order of the day to the Red Army, of May 1, 1942, shortly before Molotov's departure for London to sign the Anglo-Soviet treaty, Stalin declared: "Comrades! We are fighting for our country! For justice and freedom! We have no aim of seizing foreign territory or conquering foreign peoples!"

Although this view of the Soviet war aim, coinciding in many respects with the principles enunciated in the Atlantic Charter, formed the ideological basis for Russia's participation in the anti-Axis coalition, it would be erroneous to assume that Soviet leaders had completely discarded their traditional concept of the nature of the war.

According to this concept, two separate conflicts are now being waged within the framework of a single world war: the aggressive antagonism of Germany and Japan against the rich "owners of the world" and the "combined antagonism of the entire world against the Socialist State." These two separate wars, fantastically interwoven, brought about a coalition in 1941 in which the Soviet Union participated side by side with the two greatest capitalist powers. The first test of this alliance between the "land of socialism" and the "capitalist states" would come at the moment when the German threat had been removed

and when there remained only one strong military power on the European Continent—the Soviet Union. In as much as the “capitalist states,” while desirous of victory over Hitler also fear a victorious Russia, this theory foresees a time when the Allies will once again, after Germany has been considerably weakened, seek an anti-Soviet understanding with their recent enemy against the Soviet Union.

The conclusions to be drawn from this in Moscow are quite clear: despite all agreements, there is absolutely no assurance that the alliance with the “United Nations” will be a lasting one. In a period of long wars and supreme trials all alliances with ideologically foreign powers are considered but maneuvers, necessary zigzags of foreign policy. The turn of events may bring about new combinations, new alliances as startling and unexpected as those of the fall of 1939 or of June, 1941. While the concept of a national war of defense serves as the basis for an Anglo-Soviet coalition, the Communist theory of the “two wars” justifies the policy of waging a separate war within the framework of a world military coalition.

Both these tendencies have been clearly reflected in the history of Russia’s foreign policy during the war.

## 2. *The Warring Coalitions*

The military coalition to which Russia now belonged was expanding constantly during the subsequent months of war. Having first concluded an alliance with Great Britain alone, Russia soon became a member of a coalition of twenty-seven states. The anti-Russian coalition, on the other hand, remained basically unchanged.

The German bloc consisted of the four European states bordering on Russia from the Arctic Ocean to the Black Sea and of Italy.\* This coalition was not identical with the Axis which, by the middle of December, 1941, was at war with England and the United States.† Japan and Bulgaria, though members of the Axis, continued to observe

\* Slovakia and Albania are not taken into consideration here

† War on the United States and Great Britain was declared by Germany, Italy, Japan, Albania, Bulgaria, Rumania, and Hungary.

neutrality toward Russia, even after she was attacked by Germany. On the other hand Finland, which was not a member of this alliance, now joined the ranks of Russia's adversaries. The Axis pacts, as already indicated, had played an important auxiliary role in the formation of this anti-Soviet coalition, but the war against Russia was now carried on by an international coalition which, to distinguish it from the Axis, can be called the "German coalition."

Besides the above-mentioned anti-Soviet coalition there was also the anti-Comintern bloc, which included the Axis, the German coalition and some neutrals, and which continued to function, as it had before the outbreak of the Russo-German war, as a propagandist, ideological, and economic alliance. On November 25, 1941, a new conference of the Anti-Comintern bloc was held in Berlin. It extended the Anti-Comintern agreement for another five years and admitted new members to the alliance, thus increasing its membership to thirteen states.\* Of the members of the Anti-Comintern about half—Japan, Nanking, Bulgaria, Denmark, Manchukuo, and Spain—were not at war with Russia.

The war in which the Soviet Union was now engaged remained a strictly European conflict. Only indirectly, through her relationship with her allies, was Soviet Russia involved in a world war. As a result, the Moscow government did not participate in the work of the various international military councils, such as the "Pacific War Council" in Washington, which were concerned with the direction of military operations on a world-wide scale. In Europe, Russia's relations with the various powers now shaped up as follows:

She was at war with five states.

She had no diplomatic relations with Denmark, France, Switzerland, Spain, and Portugal, without being at war with them.

\* Originally the Anti-Comintern bloc consisted of Germany, Japan, Italy, Hungary, Spain, and Manchukuo. On November 25, 1941, seven new states were admitted: Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Rumania, Slovakia, and the Nanking government.

She maintained diplomatic relations with the three neutral states: Sweden, Bulgaria, and Turkey.

Seven states invaded by Germany and Italy—Czechoslovakia, Poland, Norway, Holland, Belgium, Yugoslavia, and Greece—while serving the former with their economic resources, were diplomatically and *de jure*, through their governments-in-exile established in London, members of the anti-German coalition.

With only one European state did Russia have a full-fledged military alliance: England.

The distinct position held by Russia among her allies and the distinctions between the various military opponents of England and Russia appeared as an abnormal phenomenon from the very first day of the Soviet Union's entrance into the war. Thus, beginning in July, 1941, repeated attempts were made to establish a united diplomatic front of England and Russia. Through the mediation of the British Government Moscow resumed diplomatic relations with the Polish, Belgian, Norwegian, Yugoslav, Greek, and Czechoslovak Governments, with which it had broken off relations but a short time previously, and established relations with the Netherlands Government.\* On September 26, 1941, the Soviet Government also recognized the national committee of Gen. Charles de Gaulle's Free French movement as the official representative of France, and on the following day it signed an agreement with the Czechoslovak Government-in-Exile for the formation of a Czech army on Soviet territory, under the general command of the Soviets. England, to cement further the unity of the anti-German coalition, decided to declare war, on Russia's insistence, against those states which were at war with Russia but not with England: Rumania, Hungary, and Finland. On November 28 ultimatums were handed to the governments of these states. Having received no reply from Rumania and Hungary, and an "unsatisfactory" reply from Finland, the Foreign Office announced on December 6, 1941, that Great Britain and the

\* *De jure* recognition by Holland of Soviet Russia, for the first time since 1917, took place at a somewhat later date—July 10, 1942.



above-mentioned states were at war as of December 7. However, this outward manifestation of unity and common action lasted but a few hours. On the same day Japan attacked the United States in the Pacific, while Russia declared her neutrality toward Japan.†

The relations of the United States with the states at war with Russia were somewhat different. Hungary and Rumania declared war on the United States on December 13, 1941, whereas the American declaration came only on June 5, 1942, and Washington still continued to maintain diplomatic relations with Finland.

### 3. *The Anglo-Soviet Alliance*

In June, 1941, Great Britain was the only state actively at war with Germany, and Russia's adherence to the new military coalition began with a rapprochement with England. For many weeks after June 22 and Churchill's radio address, British ministers, newspaper commentators, and responsible leaders insisted that "our attitude toward Communism remains unchanged" and that by allying herself with the Soviet Great Britain had not violated her position of principle. Nevertheless, Winston Churchill could now exclaim in triumph, "We are not alone!" Commenting on the first Russo-British agreement for "joint action," he informed a confused British public: "Of course it *is* an alliance."

After a month of some doubt and vacillation, pro-Soviet sentiment began to mount, particularly when the British realized that the new Eastern front was giving them a much-needed breathing spell. "England is falling in love with Russia," reported the correspondents. This love, to be sure, was not altogether selfless, but after a while it became blind and passionate. Social philosophers and political thinkers of various shades and descriptions even began

† A somewhat similar course was followed by Bulgaria with regard to Russia. As a member of the Triple Alliance, she declared war upon Great Britain and the United States, together with the other members of the Axis. She maintained a formal neutrality toward Russia, however, and diplomatic relations between the two countries were not broken off.

to search for a compromise, a synthesis "of the Russian and English ways of life." Some began to speak of a liberal or "Western" transition to Communism. A violent campaign started against two ministers—Capt. David Margesson and Lt. Col. J. T. C. Moore-Brabazon, who symbolized the spirit of "Munichism" in the British Cabinet. Public clamor was so great that in February, 1942, both men were removed from their posts. It now became fashionable for women to wear scarves with the Soviet hammer and sickle. Stalin was cheered in the cinemas, banners were seen in London with the inscription: "Quiet nights, thanks to Russia!"<sup>5</sup> A marble tablet was placed on a house in London where Lenin had once lived, and the staid *London Times* took this occasion to write an almost Marxist editorial: "Russia had been reborn and regenerated through Lenin's leadership . . . It was Lenin who first brought home to the consciousness of the western world the truth that a civilization based on the antagonism of capital and labor inevitably carried within it the seeds of its own destruction."<sup>6</sup>

In the newly created pro-Soviet atmosphere, the Moscow government found no difficulty in concluding a number of political agreements symbolic of the new combination of powers. At the end of June, 1941, several days after the German attack, a British military mission headed by Gen. F. N. Mason MacFarlane, went to Moscow for conversations with Marshal Timoshenko. In return, a Soviet military mission under the leadership of Gen. Philip Golikov came to London in early July; later it visited Washington. On July 8 Maxim Litvinov, who but a few months before had been expelled from the Central Committee of the Communist party and who as yet held no official position in the government, delivered a radio address to "the British and the United States," greeting Russia's new allies. Soon afterward he was sent to the United States to replace Constantine Oumansky as ambassador. So that he would not rank lower in Washington than Lord Halifax, a member of the British Cabinet, he was appointed Vice-Commissar of Foreign Affairs.

The first negotiations for a treaty of alliance between

Russia and Great Britain were begun by Stalin and Sir Stafford Cripps in Moscow in the first half of July. On July 12, 1941, twenty days after the German attack, the first Anglo-Russian treaty was signed. Although of few words, it was of great historical significance:

1. The two governments mutually undertake to render each other assistance and support in all kinds of the present war against Hitlerite Germany.

2. They further undertake that during this war they will neither negotiate nor conclude an armistice or treaty of peace except by mutual agreement.

#### 4. *The United States and Soviet Russia*

After June 22, 1941, relations between Soviet Russia and the United States were in principle analogous to those between Russia and England; yet shades of difference, which had existed earlier between London's policy and that of Washington toward Moscow, did not disappear. England was more closely, more directly and more vitally affected by the military outcome in Russia than was America. Every feature of events in Western Europe had more bearing upon London's policy than upon that of Washington. London was alike compelled and inclined to yield to Soviet demands to a much greater degree than was Washington.

In regard to all European problems, particularly to those of Eastern Europe, America preferred not to bind herself by direct and far-reaching agreements, but to leave the more active role to the British Government, with which America kept in very close contact. The first alliance with Soviet Russia was concluded by England, the United States, still a neutral, confined itself to providing war supplies. Even later, when the far-reaching British-Soviet treaty of May 26, 1942, for the postwar organization of Europe was concluded, the Washington government, though it had played an active role in the preliminary negotiations, did not become a party to it, and purposely refrained from adhering to it formally. Nor was Washington inclined to yield to Russian demands in regard to Polish and Baltic problems. In September, 1941, President Roose-

velt's administration even attempted, without success, to persuade Stalin to mitigate his dictatorial regime in Russia.

Following Sumner Welles's declaration on June 23, 1941, Soviet funds in the United States, amounting to \$39,000,000, which had been frozen only ten days before, were again placed at the disposal of the Russian authorities for purchases in the United States. On June 30 negotiations for supplying Russia with essential war materials were started by Oumansky, who was subsequently received by President Roosevelt on July 10. At the end of July, the President's special envoy, Harry Hopkins, visited the Soviet capital and had a number of conferences with Stalin, who informed him of the state of Russia's war economy. The agreement with the United States was hailed triumphantly in the Moscow press, and *Pravda*, in its editorial of August 7, spoke of the "community of interests of both great powers in the face of the Hitlerian menace"

On his way back from Moscow, Hopkins attended the Atlantic conference of President Roosevelt and Winston Churchill on August 14-15, at which problems connected with the Soviet-German War played a considerable part. At that meeting the two statesmen formulated a letter to Stalin, expressing the willingness of their respective nations to cooperate with and to help the Soviet Union. Stalin accepted their promise and expressed his gratitude for their move.

The same meeting of Roosevelt and Churchill witnessed the formulation of the basic program of cooperation between Great Britain and the United States, as expressed in the Atlantic Charter. Its contents were mainly directed to the countries subdued and occupied by Germany, but the question of self-determination of nations concerned Eastern Europe as well, and the two authors of the eight-point declaration had this fact clearly in mind when, after a lively preliminary discussion of the Polish problem in London and Washington, they stated the first points as follows:

1. Their countries seek no aggrandizement, territorial or other.
2. They seek no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned.

3. They uphold the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live, and seek the restoration of sovereign rights and self-government to those who have been forcibly deprived of them.

At that time, it might have seemed that this document would stir up some difficulties for the Soviet Government. However, only one month later, on September 23, at a meeting of the Interallied Council, Soviet Ambassador Maisky announced the willingness of the Soviet Union to adhere to the "fundamental principles" of the Charter, since, he said, "the Soviet Union is guided by the principle of self-determination of nations . . . The Soviet Union has also consistently and with full force denounced all violations of the sovereign rights of peoples."

The formal adherence of Soviet Russia to the Atlantic Charter took place a few months later. In December, 1941, the United States became an active participant in the World War and thus a military ally of Great Britain and Russia. On January 1, 1942, in Washington, twenty-six nations, including the Soviet Union, signed a declaration of adherence to the Atlantic Charter. Some difficulty in the wording of a common declaration was found in the fact that Soviet Russia was still at peace with Japan and the United States was still at peace with Finland. Hence the first article of the declaration was made to read:

Each government pledges itself to employ its full resources, military and economic, against those members of the Tripartite Pact and its adherents with which such government is at war.

The second article contained the pledge of all the United Nations not to conclude separate treaties of peace.

In the early stages of the Russo-German War, British and American aid to Russia was rather slow in arriving, although Moscow's requests were not very extensive. During the first three months of war Russia received only sixty million dollars' worth of war materials. Moscow was obviously disappointed.<sup>7</sup> But after a while the situa-

tion improved considerably. As Russia's needs increased, Moscow began to insist upon speedy aid. In reply to the Soviet Government's demands, England extended to it a credit of £10,000,000 and the United States one of \$100,000,000. Originally there was some hope that Russia might be able to repay these sums with exports, or at least limit herself to periodic credits without having to receive lease-lend aid.\*

A turning-point in the development of Anglo-American military and economic aid to the Soviet was marked by the Moscow conferences of Stalin, Lord Beaverbrook, and Averell Harriman between September 26 and October 1, 1941. Stalin presented a long and detailed list of war materials of which Russia, which by that time had already lost a considerable part of her war industry, stood in great need. Most of these demands were granted, and the conference was generally regarded as highly successful.

Averell Harriman, on President Roosevelt's instructions, also broached the subject of freedom of religion in Soviet Russia. A heated discussion was then going on in the American press regarding freedom of worship in the Soviet Union, and Mr. Harriman pointed out to Stalin that it was the President's belief that American-Russian collaboration would be considerably facilitated if the Soviet Government would grant a greater measure of religious freedom. The Soviet leaders replied that worship was free in Russia. In confirmation of this, the Narkomindel spokesman, Lozovsky, as well as the Soviet Embassy in London, referred to the paragraph in the Soviet Constitution which guaranteed—as did the whole constitution for that matter—a number of democratic rights to the Russian people. The only concrete result of Harriman's *démarche* was the suspension, on September 30, while the American Mission was in Moscow, of the Soviet magazine, *Bezboznik* (*The Godless*), and perhaps Stalin's toast to President Roosevelt:

\* "The Russians have told us," the British, Chancellor of the Exchequer reported on September 6, 1941, "that they would not wish any such help provided as a gift, but they have asked for credit . . . To this we have most willingly agreed, and no monetary limit will be placed on this assistance which we so gladly give to Russia "

"May God help him in his task."\* With this the discussion ended.

Following the Moscow conference, the Soviet Union was at once included in the system of American lease-lend aid. "I have found," President Roosevelt declared on November 7, 1941, "that the defense of the U. S. S. R. is vital to the defense of the United States." One billion dollars was set aside for lease-lend aid to Russia.

Shipments of raw materials and military supplies to Russia on the basis of the Moscow agreement now proceeded normally on the part of Great Britain, although there were some delays in the United States. The chief obstacle which subsequently prevented normal American deliveries was the new war which broke out in the Pacific. By February, 1942, Great Britain had fulfilled her obligations to Russia 100 per cent! whereas the United States had delivered only 50 per cent of the material promised.\*

Eventually normal deliveries were established, and the appropriation for lease-lend aid to Russia was increased from one billion to three billion dollars in June, 1942, as a result of Molotov's visit to Washington.

The total value of lease-lend exports to Russia, from November, 1941, to August, 1942, increasing from quarter to quarter, amounted to about \$800,000,000, i.e., about \$90,000,000 a month; in the quarter June-August, 1942, the monthly average rose to about \$120,000,000. To evaluate these figures properly it should be remembered that a part of the goods shipped never reached their destination and that the lease-lend aid also included, apart from exported goods, sums for services rendered in America and abroad, for instance, for shipping, training, etc.

In Britain Russia received a priority of 80 per cent of the war production sent abroad; as the British information

\* *New York Times*, November 19, 1941 "Stalin knew the toast would be repeated by the delegates in their report to Mr. Roosevelt, and it was surmised by the delegates that he wanted to let Mr. Roosevelt know what he had said."

\* In this connection President Roosevelt stated on February 17 that by March 1 deliveries to Russia would be normalized and that all rumors that the United States was withholding shipments to Russia because of political reasons were groundless, for "Washington is the worst rumor-factory and the source of more lies than any other part of the country."

service reported on July 14, 1942, 2,000 tanks had been sent from England to Russia since the month of November, 1941, along with other materials from shoes to sugar.

### 5. *Poland*

Soviet relations with Poland in the main followed the pattern of Russia's relations with her other newly-acquired military allies. Two days after the German attack, Gen. Wladyslaw Sikorski, Premier of the Polish Government in London, in agreement with the British Government, stated publicly that now the Soviet Government would, in all probability, consent to "cancel the pact of 1939" and that this "should logically bring us back to the position created by the Treaty of Riga."<sup>9</sup> Thus the stumbling block which exactly two years before had stood in the path of the Anglo-Russian negotiations was once more—in a new form, to be sure—brought to the fore. But in the new European situation even this perennial question could no longer be an obstacle to the military partnership between Russia and the anti-German bloc.

At the beginning of July, 1941, General Sikorski and the Soviet Ambassador to Great Britain, Ivan Maisky, aided and encouraged by Anthony Eden, opened negotiations in London for a new Soviet-Polish pact. The Polish Government demanded not only the release of Polish prisoners of war and of civilians exiled by Soviet authorities from the Polish territories occupied by them almost two years before,\* but also a general amnesty for all Polish political prisoners. The Soviet Government readily agreed to these demands and to Sikorski's proposal to create an army composed of Poles living on Soviet territory. When the discussion came to the matter of future frontiers, the Soviet representatives proposed the establishment of an entirely new line, to be based upon ethnographical principles. The Polish Government would not agree to this basis of negotiations and the question was left open.

The agreement which was signed in London on July 30,

\* According to official Polish data, from one and a half to two million Poles, four-fifths of them men, had been exiled to various parts of Russia.



1941, was henceforth to be the guiding principle and the legal basis of Soviet-Polish relations for the duration of the war. "The Government of the U. S. S. R.," the first paragraph of the agreement stated, "recognizes the Soviet-German Treaties of 1939 concerning territorial changes in Poland as having lost their validity. The Polish Government declares that Poland is not bound by any agreement with any third power, which is directed against the U. S. S. R."

In a special "protocol" the Moscow government expressed its readiness to grant a general amnesty to all Polish prisoners of war and also to Polish citizens "detained on other sufficient grounds." At the same time Anthony Eden, on the basis of a previous understanding with the United States as well as with both Russia and Poland, handed to General Sikorski a British note stating that "His Majesty's Government do not recognize any territorial changes in Poland since August 1939." Sikorski, in his note of reply, declared that "the Polish Government have never recognized any territorial changes effected in Poland since the outbreak of the present war."

The question of Poland's borders was thus left open for settlement after the war. This caused a serious crisis in the ranks of the Polish Government, accompanied by a strong protest by the right-wing Polish parties in London.

On August 14 Russia signed an agreement for the creation of a Polish army on Soviet soil, to consist of an estimated six divisions. Although led by a Polish general, this army was to be under the orders of the Soviet Supreme Command. Nevertheless, the new Polish Army which soon took form in Russia differed in many respects from the Red Army. For one thing, instead of political commissars the Poles appointed chaplains. The greatest difficulty confronting both Russians and Poles was the problem of equipping this army, since Russia lacked both uniforms and ammunition. Moreover, even in the Beaverbrook-Harriman agreement with Russia, of September, 1941, the outfitting of a special Polish Army was not foreseen. The Poles went energetically to work, and the well-known Gen. Wladyslaw Anders was appointed commander of the

Polish armed forces in Russia. A prisoner for over twenty months in Moscow's notorious Lubyanka prison, the General, upon receiving his appointment was released by Lavrenti Beria, all-powerful Soviet Commissar of Internal Affairs.

During the fall of 1941 Russo-Polish relations were undoubtedly better than in many years. The Polish Army was rapidly taking shape. Volunteers, sometimes as many as a thousand a day, were streaming to join its ranks. Polish exiles, living under difficult conditions in remote parts of European and Asiatic Russia, were being released, as were Polish political prisoners.

On December 3 and 4 General Sikorski and Stalin had two long conferences in Moscow; they discussed a number of problems connected with the new Polish Army, the situation of Polish citizens on Soviet territory, and so forth. Ostensibly, they were in agreement on all questions discussed; on December 4 a new declaration was issued on Russo-Polish "Friendship, Agreement, and Military Collaboration," signed by Stalin and Sikorski. Making common cause with the "democratic countries," both parties referred to the punishment that would be meted out "to the Hitler criminals after a victorious war," and also to the creation of a new system of international relations, "based on respect for international law, to be enforced by the collective military might of all the Allied states." During their conversations Stalin also told the Polish Premier that he wished to see postwar Poland "greater and stronger than ever before."\* At the same time he broached anew the question of Poland's borders. Sikorski, referring to the July agreement, declined to discuss this question. There was thus re-introduced an element of conflict which adversely affected the relations between the two new allies.

According to the Soviet view, the districts of Eastern Poland annexed by the Soviets in 1939 should be regarded as Soviet until the entire problem was settled by a new

\* General Sikorski's statement at a press conference in Washington on March 24, 1942. According to some sources, Stalin proposed to give Poland East Prussia in compensation for her Eastern Polish territories to be annexed by the U. S. S. R.

agreement. As long as the question of the possession of these territories remained open, the Soviet Government saw no reason for not regarding them as part of the U. S. S. R. In a note on German atrocities, by Molotov, sent to all Allied governments on January 6, 1942, the cities of Lwów and Vilno were listed among Soviet cities. In his note of April 27 Molotov again referred to the former Polish city of Pinsk as Russian. Similarly, in his order of the day to the Red Army on February 23, 1942, Stalin referred to the Red Banner which would "soon wave over Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, White Russia, and the Ukraine." At the same time the Soviet Government ruled that only those Polish nationals who were ethnically Poles would be regarded as citizens of Poland. This excluded from Polish citizenship all Ukrainians, White Russians, and Jews, even those born in Poland. Many of these people were deprived of their Polish passports and prevented from leaving Russia. A number of Polish-Jewish leaders who had been freed following the amnesty granted by the Soviet Government to Polish citizens were rearrested.

This attitude on the part of the Soviet Government gave rise to much apprehension in London and Washington. Influential English circles, as mentioned previously, were willing to accede to Stalin's demands with regard to Poland and the Baltic States on the theory that "Soviet intentions nowhere go beyond territories embodied in the Soviet Union when Hitler marched against it."<sup>10</sup> As to the Atlantic Charter, on which Poland placed its main reliance, the British found the Soviet demands "in no way incompatible with the security of Europe, which the framers of the Atlantic Charter thought to insure." In Washington the Soviet claims met with strong opposition. In March, 1942, General Sikorski visited Washington, where he conferred with President Roosevelt. Their discussions included the question of the Polish frontiers, although only "within the framework of general world problems." Nevertheless, the Polish Premier expressed his gratitude to the President for "his sympathetic and positive attitude toward Poland."<sup>11</sup> The Atlantic Charter, General Sikorski stated after his visit to the President, "may

either be accepted as a whole or rejected as a whole." This was obviously a rebuke to the British for their opportunist policy. As for the Russians, the General was less diplomatic and quite blunt: "The question of the Polish borders will be settled by the correlation of forces after the war." Finally, during Molotov's famous visit to Washington in June, 1942, the question of Poland's borders was raised again; for the moment at least the American view prevailed.

In the meantime, the Polish Army in Russia was only partially employed on the Soviet front. Part of it was transferred to Iran, and Polish regiments were also fighting in North Africa. By the middle of April, 1942, forty to sixty thousand Polish soldiers were in Iran,<sup>12</sup> and early in August it was decided to remove the Polish Army from Russia altogether. The reason given was the difficulty of equipping the Polish divisions in Russia and also "other difficulties."

Despite these misunderstandings and disagreements both governments, allied by military treaty and frequently united by a common view on various problems of strategy, such as the question of the "second front," continued, in the face of the common enemy, to maintain friendly relations.

### 6. *Finland*

The little Finnish Republic was the least reliable and the weakest link in the German coalition. When Finland entered the war on Germany's side, she was a member neither of the Triple Alliance nor of the Anti-Comintern bloc. Although the exact terms of the Finnish-German treaty were kept secret, political leaders in Helsinki declared more than once that Finland was waging a separate war. Finland's distinct position within the German bloc explains in large measure the lively diplomatic activity carried on in Helsinki by Great Britain and the United States during the Russo-Finnish battles of 1941-42. Essentially it was an attempt to wean Finland away from her German ally.

In the Finnish view, the new war against Russia was

merely "a continuation of the war of 1939-40," which could only be ended by Finland's regaining the territories which she had been forced to cede to the Soviet, and by the abrogation of the Moscow Peace Treaty of March 12, 1940. However, in view of obligations which the Finns had assumed toward the Germans, Helsinki made it clear that Finland had no intention of making a separate peace with Russia, and would certainly not "conclude peace with the existing Soviet Government"; however, having reached certain definite borders, the Finnish Army would actually cease its military operations and would maintain only a "border guard."

A month after Finland had joined in the war, Helsinki still maintained diplomatic relations with Great Britain. However, upon Berlin's insistence, the Finnish Government on July 28 informed London that it was severing all diplomatic relations with Britain, "for normal diplomatic relations [between the two countries] were an impossibility while Finland was on the side of Germany." Although stopping short of a declaration of war, Downing Street was now forced to abandon its diplomatic action in favor of peace between Russia and Finland. The United States was left alone to continue its pressure toward this end.

Basically, the British approach to the problem was analogous to that of Washington, although, unlike the United States, which was not yet at war with Germany, London was prepared to go all the way and to declare war on Finland. On September 28 the British Government warned Finland that, if it "persisted in invading purely Russian territory," England would regard the Finnish Republic as an "open enemy," not only during the war but also when the time came to make peace.

In the latter part of October the Finns replied to London's warning, pointing out that they were waging a purely defensive war, a continuation of the 1939 conflict, and that Finland had undertaken no "political engagements" toward Germany, if the Finns had carried the war to Soviet territory, it was because their army was forced to occupy airdromes and bases from which the Russians were directing their attacks against Finnish territory. This

reply was deemed evasive and "unsatisfactory" in London. On December 6, 1941, Britain declared war on Finland.

The German-Finnish agreement debarred Finland from concluding a separate armistice. Thus the numerous attempts by London and Washington to terminate the Russo-Finnish conflict were predoomed to failure. Finland neither desired nor was in a position to violate her agreement with Germany. Although a rather small German force was maintained on Finnish territory, there is hardly any doubt that, had Finland violated the terms of the agreement, Hitler, to forestall a situation dangerous to his strategic plans, would have acted in Finland as he did in the Balkans. Moreover, by now the political leaders of Finland had staked everything on a German victory.

As early as August, 1941, the State Department received assurances from the Soviet Ambassador in Washington, Constantine Oumansky, that "the Soviet Government was prepared to negotiate a new treaty of peace with Finland, which would involve the making of territorial concessions to Finland."\* On August 18 Sumner Welles inquired of the Finnish Minister in Washington, Hjalmar Procopé, whether the Finnish Government would agree to terminate the war on the basis of territorial concessions. Having failed to receive a reply from Helsinki to this inquiry, Secretary of State Cordell Hull on October 3 invited the Finnish Envoy to the State Department. The Secretary of State reported the following conversation with Mr. Procope:

I proceeded at once to say that it was unnecessary to go over the pro's and con's of the situation as the war relates to Finland and the United States, or to the likes and dislikes of either government with respect to Stalin and Hitler, or their respective countries. I said that I am glad to see Finland recover her lost territory . . . The one question uppermost in the mind of my Government with respect to Finland is whether Finland is

\* Statement by Mr. Cordell Hull in Washington, on November 12. At first both Maxim Litvinov and S. Lozovsky, speaking for the Soviet Government, denied that Russia had taken the initiative in offering peace to Finland. They insisted that all peace overtures originated in Washington. Subsequently, however, on November 18, 1941, the Narkomindel confirmed the correctness of Mr. Hull's statement.

going to be content to regain her lost territory and to stop there, or whether she will undertake to go farther, if she has not already done so, so that the logical effect of her course of action would be to project her on the side of Hitler into the general war between Germany and Russia and the other countries involved.<sup>13</sup>

The Finnish President received the United States Minister on October 23 and told him "it was hoped it would be possible before long to release on leave a certain number of men from the army for work on the home front . . . But Finland in her fight for existence cannot enter any engagements that would denote imperiling her national security by the artificial suspension or annulment of military operations which are fully justified."\*

Continuing its pressure, the State Department, in two notes to Helsinki of October 27 and 30, 1941, instructed the American Minister to inform the Finnish Government that, if Finland desired to maintain friendship with the United States, satisfactory evidence must be given of her intention promptly to discontinue military operations against Soviet Russia.<sup>14</sup> The Finnish Government finally replied to these notes in a lengthy note of November 12; rehearsing the history of the Russo-Finnish war of 1939-40, it pointed out that, whereas Germany presented no threat to Finland, Russia did. Soon afterward Finland joined officially the ranks of the Anti-Comintern bloc, and with this act Anglo-American attempts to remove the Finnish Republic from the war came to an end.

In the meantime Finnish troops had occupied not only all the territories lost to Russia in 1940 but also Eastern Karelia with Petrozavodsk. On October 5 Vaino Tanner's newspaper, *Suomen Sosial-demokratii*, stated that

a war of conquest does not belong to the tasks of the Finnish Army. After Petrozavodsk there is reason to hope that the war operations proper may be nearing a close on Finland's part. After the conclusion of operations it will only be necessary to mount guard until the peace treaty settles the frontiers.

For the anti-German coalition an agreement of this na-

\* This declaration of the Finnish President was mentioned in the Finnish note to the United States of November 12, 1941.

ture with Finland was a vital necessity, since it would free the Murmansk railway for the transportation of military materials to the Soviet fronts. For this very reason the German High Command could not permit the Finns to bring their war against Russia to a close.

Finland's invasion of purely Soviet territory was viewed with apprehension by the anti-German powers. Besides cutting off the Murmansk railway, it also provided additional proof of Finland's close military collaboration with Germany, in rebuttal of her constant claims to be fighting merely a defensive war. On December 1, at a secret session of the Finnish Diet, deputies of various parties demanded the annexation of Eastern Karelia, which had always belonged to the Soviet Union. Representatives of the small Finnish Fascist party even demanded the seizure of "adjoining territories"

A week later the United States was at war with Germany. This new factor wrought fresh confusion among the Finnish political leaders, who still valued American friendship and still hoped to steer a pro-American course. Germany was now demanding a Finnish declaration of war against the United States, while Washington continued to press for the liquidation of the Russo-Finnish conflict.<sup>15</sup>

During the first half of 1942 Finnish military activity lessened considerably and one might say that the Russo-Finnish front had become stabilized, at least for the time being. Attempts were now made, particularly through Stockholm, to establish contact between Finland and Russia, but without success. In the meantime American-Finnish relations grew worse. This became particularly apparent after Hitler's much-advertised visit to General Mannerheim "on the occasion of his birthday" on June 4, 1942. As if in retaliation for this demonstrative act, on August 16, 1942, the United States withdrew all consular representatives in Finland.

### *7. The Near East*

During the first year of the Russo-German war the Soviet Government participated in joint action with Great



Britain in Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan After June 22, 1941, Von Papen's political line in Turkey became relatively simple. The war, he was now saying, could end with a victory for Russia or for Germany. If Russia won, the Balkans would fall into her lap like a ripe plum, and Turkey's fate would be one of complete subjugation to Russia and "sovietization." In case of a German victory, should Ankara have joined the Axis voluntarily, Turkey stood to gain many advantages, including large territories. All efforts of the British and Soviet diplomats were now exerted toward convincing the Turkish Government that Papen's thesis was untrue, that Turkey was not threatened by the Anglo-Soviet bloc, and that she stood nothing to gain from joining Germany. There were many declarations to this effect, many *démarches*, and many conferences between the Turkish leaders and Anglo-Soviet diplomats.

The publication of the first Anglo-Soviet agreement of July 12, 1941, caused great surprise in Ankara. To counteract Von Papen's diplomacy, which of course sought to paint the agreement in anti-Turkish colors, Stalin, on London's advice, wrote on July 28, 1941, a personal letter to the Turkish President, Ismet İnönü, assuring him that the Soviet Union had no intention of either occupying or controlling the Dardanelles. In the meantime the Narkomindel reiterated on every occasion its denial of Berlin's version of Molotov's conversation with Hitler in November, 1940, concerning Moscow's claim to the Dardanelles. On August 8, 1941, *Tass* issued an official declaration that rumors of Russia having been granted the right to control the Dardanelles, as part of the agreement with Great Britain, "are unfounded and are merely German propaganda." On August 10 the British and Soviet Ambassadors made identical declarations at the Turkish Foreign Office to the effect that both governments "confirm their fidelity to the Montreux convention, and assure the Turkish Government that they have no aggressive intentions or claims whatever with regard to the Straits . . . [They] are prepared scrupulously to respect the territorial integrity of the Turkish Republic."

While fully appreciating the desire of the Turkish Gov-

ernment to remain neutral, the declarations went on to state, Great Britain and Soviet Russia "would nevertheless be prepared to render Turkey every help and assistance in the event of her being attacked by a European power."<sup>16</sup>

Early in December, during his visit to Russia, Anthony Eden summoned to Moscow Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen, the British Ambassador to Turkey. Before departing for the Soviet capital, the Ambassador called on the Turkish Foreign Minister, Saracoglu, to assure him that no anti-Turkish plans would be hatched in Russia. Nevertheless, when the British Envoy returned to Ankara in early January, 1942, the German press reported that Great Britain and Russia had come to an agreement "at the expense of Turkey." To counteract the Berlin propaganda, Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugesson issued a formal statement to the press that "German reports that Britain has sold out Europe east of the Rhine to Russia and has agreed to her controlling the Dardanelles are childish and fantastic," and that for Britain and Russia the guiding principle with regard to Turkey was respect for her "territorial integrity and neutrality."\* In a speech in the House of Commons on January 8, 1942, Anthony Eden made it clear that "Turkey has nothing to fear from an Allied victory, and her territorial integrity is in no way menaced in that quarter."

On February 2, 1942, an attempt was made upon the life of Von Papen in Ankara, and two of the alleged assassins ostensibly found refuge in the Soviet Legation. Although Von Papen was unhurt, the incident threatened for a while to turn into a major conflict between Russia and Turkey. Early in March the Turkish police surrounded the Soviet Legation in Ankara, and the threatened diplomatic explosion was averted only when the Soviet Government agreed to the surrender of two persons sought by the police. Subsequently, the incident was settled amicably. On July 17 the two alleged Russian bomb throwers were sentenced by a Turkish court to twenty years' imprisonment and their two Turkish accomplices to ten years.

\* On January 23, 1942, the Ankara government, as a friendly gesture toward Russia, prohibited the importation into Turkey of copies of the Russian Nazi newspaper, *Novoye Slovo*, published in Berlin

Germany's growing influence in Turkey was also due to its almost complete monopoly of foreign trade within Europe. In 1942 Ankara concluded trade agreements with a number of Germany's allies, while England and Russia were able to supply Turkey with only small quantities of goods shipped across Iraq. To counteract the impact of Germany's economic monopoly, Washington adopted a more active policy toward Turkey, which was now included among nations eligible to receive American lease-lend aid. On May 2, 1942, the State Department went so far as to liken Turkish orders to "defense orders."

Turkey's political situation grew steadily more complicated and ominous, particularly after General Rommel's *Afrika Korps* had reached the borders of Egypt and the main German Armies had entered the Caucasus. Turkey was now the last Western barrier for an Anglo-Russian front in Iran. The Turks continued stoutly to resist Berlin's pressure and to cling to their more and more precarious neutrality.

While the diplomatic struggle between Germany and the Anglo-Russian allies was raging in Turkey, the rest of the Near East had fallen almost completely into the anti-German orbit. During the second half of 1941 for the first time since the outbreak of war, the Near East was free of German influence. By July and August, 1941, it was obvious that one of the best routes for shipping supplies to Russia was via Iran. This required the building of new roads, the laying of railroad tracks, the construction of docks and depots. It was even more necessary to free Iran from the powerful German influence which had become entrenched over many years in its political and economic life. Iran's existing government preferred to collaborate with Germany. During 1939-41 Nazi influence was strengthened by the inflow of several thousand additional Germans, who organized German banks and "tourist offices." Even a Nazi "Brown House" appeared in Teheran. The Shah made no secret of his belief that Germany was going to win the war, and the country was ready to welcome Hitler's legions.

For Iran the second half of 1941 was a critical period. On August 25 Soviet troops entered the country from the north and British from the south. In a few days the Anglo-Russian forces had established contact on Iranian territory. At the first conference between the British and Russian military representatives, at Kazvin, in early September, it was agreed that the British would guard the large territories of southern Iran while the Russians took control of the north. The Iranian Government was given assurances of complete independence and of regular payment for the lease of the oil-producing districts.<sup>17</sup> However, Anglo-Russian relations with Iran were far from being regulated, for the latter placed many obstacles in the way of expelling the German Legation and German nationals.

The working out of an Anglo-Russian agreement with Iran took four entire months, partly because influential Iranian circles hoped to drag out the negotiations long enough to ascertain how the war in Europe and Asia was developing. Finally, an agreement was signed in Teheran on January 29, 1942. By it both powers guaranteed the integrity of Iranian territory, and promised to extend necessary military aid and to consult with the Iranian Government in matters pertaining to internal policy. They also agreed to withdraw their troops from Iranian territory as soon as the international situation would permit. The agreement was to remain in force until six months after the end of the war.

On April 14, 1942, Iran severed diplomatic relations with Japan, which had continued Axis activity in the country even after the expulsion of the Germans and Italians. Soon afterward, on May 2, 1942, President Roosevelt announced that Iran would receive American lease-lend aid.

In Afghanistan, too, the British Government persuaded the government to expel all German nationals. In November, 1941, the last German residents left Afghanistan. For the first time in many years the Near East was completely free of German agents.

### 8. *The 'Second Front'*

Immediately following the German attack and during the first negotiations with the British military mission, the Soviet Government presented not only a list of needed supplies but also a plan for an "auxiliary front" by means of which the British could relieve the pressure on the Red Army. The first projects for a "second front" had in fact emerged from Stalin's office in July, 1941. The British military mission, however, presented Stalin with "a long document explaining in detail why none of the suggestions offered was practical."<sup>18</sup>

At first Soviet Russia seemed ready to accept the British arguments and to regard the entire question of the second front as a strategic rather than a political problem. But doubts began to creep into Kremlin circles. Was Britain rejecting the plan for a second front because she could not open one or because she did not want to? What was at the core of British intentions: a speedy Red Army victory over the Germans, or a prolongation of the war until armies other than Russia's would be ready to march to Berlin?

Gradually the entire problem shifted from the sphere of strategy to that of politics. Whatever were England's motives, this new element of disagreement affected adversely the strategy of a unified war, since each country was carrying on individual, unrelated military operations which were not directed by a joint command. British military missions found it well-nigh impossible to get any concrete information as to the extent of Russia's military strength and potential. Nor could they visit the Soviet front. While Russia was extremely cordial in her relations with the Allies, the function of Britain and America was limited to serving as arsenals of war rather than as military allies.

In the meantime the situation on the Russian front had become difficult, and Moscow intensified the demand for a second front. The question became an object of internal politics, in both Great Britain and the United States. On October 12 the British Communist party adopted a resolution declaring that "Britain's honor now depends on whether she starts an invasion in the west."<sup>19</sup> Ernest

Bevin, British Laborite Minister, replied on October 19 that he "would never be a party to a landing on the Continent unless the forces could be equipped as never before." He was supported in this by Anthony Eden who declared on October 25 that "war is a long-term business" and its outcome "will not be settled by any sudden, brilliant improvisation."

It was then that Stalin, cautiously at first, publicly broached the question of the second front.

The absence of a second front in Europe [he stated in his speech of November 6, 1941] relieves the position of the German Army; there cannot be any doubt that the appearance of a second front on the Continent of Europe—and undoubtedly this will appear in the near future—will essentially relieve the position of our armies.

Equally cautious was Maxim Litvinov's reference to this matter upon his arrival in Washington to assume the duties of ambassador.

We naturally [he said in his first press conference on December 13] would have welcomed the creation somewhere in Europe of a second front . . . We never complained, however, never made any demands upon our ally, England, that she should create such a front, but took into consideration her assurance as to the impossibility, difficulty or prematurity of invasions of the Continent.

During the winter months of 1941-42 Soviet diplomatic pressure for the opening up of a second front increased steadily. Germany was preparing for the spring campaign, and there was little doubt that she was concentrating enormous forces on the Eastern front. Only a second front, the Russians felt, could relieve the situation. When Stalin, as Commissar of Defense, issued an order of the day to the Russian fighting forces on February 23, 1942, he mentioned the help Germany was getting from her allies and added, "but the Red Army has no such support" He omitted completely any mention of the military operations of the Allies on other fronts. Commenting upon this order, the official party organ, *Bolshevik*, also failed to mention Russia's allies, but referred instead to the Red Army's struggle

in 1919-21 against Anglo-French forces. Nor was there a word about the Allies in the report of A. S. Shcherbakov, Stalin's close collaborator, who on the anniversary of Lenin's death, gave a long review of Russia's military situation.

Reflecting Moscow's attitude, a number of prominent persons and newspapers in Great Britain and the United States gave voice to deep-seated suspicion of London's motives. "The reluctance in opening of a second front," D. N. Pritt, Labor Member of Parliament, told a meeting in North Hornsey, "sprang from powerful influences who were still hoping for reconciliation with Hitler and for the defeat of Russia. They were 'Men of Munich,' the same people who praised Rudolf Hess as an idealist Nazi."<sup>20</sup>

Even more blunt and critical was Ivan Maisky's statement, when, on March 25, he presented Soviet decorations to a number of British fliers: "I do not know whether there was ever in history a commander-in-chief who was completely prepared on the eve of battle . . . After all, one cannot wait until the last button is sewed on the uniform of the very last soldier." Somewhat similar were the sentiments expressed by Maxim Litvinov in speeches delivered in America between February and April, 1942.

The opening of a second front became one of the great issues in the Soviet Union and in the internal political life of its allies. In June, 1942, following Molotov's visit to Washington, it entered upon another phase.

### 9. *War Aims*

Territorial problems in Eastern Europe again called for Allied diplomatic attention immediately after Germany's attack on Russia. The question of Poland's postwar borders, the fate of the Baltic States, the application of the principles of the Atlantic Charter to the territories bordering on Russia, were debated heatedly and at length in all Allied capitals. The future frontiers of Finland also formed a subject of negotiation between Moscow, Washington, London and Helsinki.

It was not so much the question of territories as such that prompted Stalin to press for a clarification of Allied war aims. Far more significant considerations were at stake. There is hardly any doubt but that many influential Allied circles feared that, after the defeat of Germany, Soviet Russia would become the dominant force on the European Continent. The mere fact that during the war many anti-Soviet voices remained silent or spoke only in whispers did not at all signify that they had become reconciled to the idea of Russian hegemony over the Continent. Nor could Moscow reconcile itself to the rather vague and indefinite position to which Russia was relegated; it had grounds to fear that its victory, once won, might prove to be ephemeral. Moscow suspected and mistrusted its allies. The anti-Soviet views of considerable sections of influential opinion in the Allied countries were no secret, although for the moment, to be sure, they were not expressed openly. Profound contradictions, which for two decades had isolated Soviet Russia from the "capitalist world," persisted after the Soviet had entered the war against the common enemy.

The British Government, in its desire to weld together a solid front, was ready to meet Stalin's persistent requests for the formulation of a comprehensive and binding peace program. In this Britain had the unqualified support of the United States. It was many months, however, before a workable program could be drafted. Only two fundamental solutions to this problem were possible: the division of Central Europe into spheres of influence, the Soviet sphere embracing Eastern Europe, and at least part of Germany (there was some talk of its extending to the Oder, the Elbe, and even to the Rhine), or a joint guarantee of "collective security," a lasting and firm alliance of the two victorious powers, England and Russia. According to the second solution, none of the small Balkan and Central European States would fall into either the Russian or the British sphere, and their fate would depend upon the joint action of both allies.

After considerable diplomatic groundwork Anthony Eden went to Moscow in December, 1941. His mission was



to discuss with Soviet authorities not only current questions relating to the conduct of the war but also the postwar reorganization of Europe. Eden had five conferences with Stalin, some of them lasting as long as four hours. Agreement was reached on a number of questions affecting the immediate conduct of the war and, according to an official communiqué, an exchange of views also took place on "the postwar organization of peace and security in Europe," which "provided much important and useful material" but little else. Stalin informed the British Foreign Minister that Soviet Russia had no intention "to spread her form of government over the world."<sup>21</sup> Full agreement was reached at these Moscow conferences on Turkish independence, of which the Ankara government was informed at once.

Some of the demands put forward by Stalin at his conferences with Eden concerned Russia's postwar "strategic frontiers," i.e., Bessarabia, Bukovina, the Baltic States, part of Finnish territory, and a British guarantee regarding Iran. The question of Germany's future was raised too, and that of a "strong Poland" as a Russian guarantee against future aggression, of which Stalin had spoken to General Sikorski not long before. "There is no use pretending," Robert Post reported from London in connection with Eden's visit to Stalin, "that after the war is over Russia is not going to have claims to a part in the reorganization of the world, which the British are not going to like."<sup>22</sup> Subsequently summarizing the results of his Moscow visit in the House of Commons, Anthony Eden stated quite openly that on the question of postwar world reorganization his discussions with Stalin were merely "a beginning."

Further negotiations were carried on through diplomatic channels. Washington was drawn into the discussion, with the result that, much to the displeasure of the Soviet Government, they were protracted considerably, and many months passed without a definite decision being reached. In his speech at Bristol on February 8 Sir Stafford Cripps (since February 20, 1942, a member of the British War Cabinet) spoke out to America:

We want our American friends to realize that, if they are going to partake with us in the reconstruction of Europe, it is vital that these decisions should not be too long delayed. Delay will add to the suspicions between this country and the Soviet Union—suspicions which have not, because of their historical foundations, completely disappeared.<sup>23</sup>

The British were by now ready to concede far-reaching territorial changes in favor of Russia. Apprehensive lest they lose their ally or mar Anglo-Russian relations, Churchill and his Cabinet were determined to brave the criticism and protests which such concessions would have called forth in England, in America, and also on the part of the smaller European nations whose governments were aware of British sentiments. A campaign now began in the British press to prepare public opinion for the government's decision to accede to Russia's territorial demands. Even the conservative London *Times* wrote on February 12, 1942, that "recent events have shown that the imperative necessities of Russian defense provided a more solid foundation for some past claims [the Soviet claims of 1939, during the Anglo-Soviet negotiations, as to the Baltic countries and Eastern Poland] than most people in this country were prepared to concede to them at the time."

In the meantime Anthony Eden had already prepared the draft of an agreement, and the United States Ambassador, John G. Winant, made a trip home to acquaint the President with its contents. It was in the United States that the British plan ran into a snag. Sikorski's visit to Washington prompted the White House to caution. The President, unlike Churchill, was not so intimately tied to Moscow, and, moreover, as the prime mover behind most of the principles enunciated in the Atlantic Charter, he foresaw a defeat for its principles if Britain concluded her proposed agreement with Russia. Roosevelt remained to the very end in opposition to the original draft for a Russo-British pact, and it was primarily due to his intransigence that the entire question was redirected at the very last moment into new channels.

On May 21 Molotov arrived in London for discussion on the conduct of the war, which, in the Soviet view, resolved

itself essentially into the question of a second front and a clear statement on war aims. Churchill, as already indicated, was not ready to assume the grave responsibility for the creation of a second front in 1942 but he was disposed reluctantly to accede to the Russian demands for "strategic frontiers."

In the meantime Washington negotiated with London an alternative plan for an agreement with the U. S. S. R., which was essentially as follows:<sup>24</sup>

1. Great Britain was to conclude a long-term agreement with the U. S. S. R., safeguarding the security of both states, with the moral and wherever necessary the physical support of the United States.

2. Great Britain and the United States were in agreement on the creation of a second front as soon as possible.

3. The question of the Baltic States and of the territories of Eastern Poland and Finland was to remain open until after the war.

4. Great Britain and the United States obligated themselves to increase and accelerate the delivery of war supplies to the Soviet Union.

5. The United States, in conformity with Soviet wishes, was to declare war upon Hungary, Bulgaria, and Rumania, thereby removing them from the boundary and other protections of the Atlantic Charter.

When Eden received Washington's suggestions, fear was expressed in London government circles that they would not be acceptable to Russia. After consultation with Stalin, however, Molotov accepted the alternative plan, and on May 26 the Anglo-Soviet Treaty was signed in London by the Soviet Foreign Commissar and Anthony Eden. Superseding the Anglo-Russian agreement of July 12, 1941, the May treaty, concluded for twenty years, called for "common action to preserve peace and resist aggression in the postwar period." It envisaged the creation of an international organization, with the participation of other powers, for safeguarding peace in Europe. Until some acceptable machinery for accomplishing this aim had been developed, however, Great Britain and Russia took it upon

themselves to "take all measures in their power to render impossible the repetition of aggression and violation of peace by Germany or any of the States associated with her in acts of aggression in Europe."

No territorial changes in Europe were included in the text of the agreement. On the contrary, both parties agreed to act in the future in accordance with "the two principles of not seeking territorial aggrandizement for themselves and of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states."

Finally, an agreement was reached on mutual military and other support, should either of the contracting parties during the postwar period become involved in hostilities with Germany or any of her European allies.

Thus, instead of dividing Europe into spheres of influence, the Anglo-Russian Treaty laid the foundation for joint action in the organization of peace. It contained the germ of the previously discarded idea of "collective security," reinforced by the military might of both England and Russia. It was also a victory for the small powers which were struggling desperately for their sovereignty and independence.

On the invitation of President Roosevelt, Molotov went from London to Washington where he spent 5 days, from May 29 to June 4, 1942. The main result of his conversations in the White House was an understanding on the second front and the speeding up of American supplies to the Red Army. According to the brief White House announcement of June 11,

in the course of the conversations, full understanding was reached with regard to the urgent task of creating a second front in Europe in 1942.

In addition, the measures for increasing and speeding up the supplies of planes, tanks, and other kinds of war materials from the United States to the Soviet Union were discussed.

The agreement, so far as it applied to the second front, was formulated rather vaguely, and was conditional upon many other factors of strategy and expediency which were not made public. Staunch advocates of a second front in-

terpreted the Washington statement as a definite decision to create the front in short order. At the first wartime meeting of the Supreme Soviet, on June 18, 1942, Molotov reported on his trips to London and Washington, and the Anglo-Russian agreements were ratified.

By the end of June the Soviet Armies had begun their retreat in the Caucasus, but the much-heralded second front did not appear. Great Britain too suffered a serious setback in Libya, and was diverting the bulk of the military supplies and equipment required for the creation of a second front to bolster her position in North Africa. Disappointed and hard-pressed, the Soviet leaders, first in their English-language daily, *The Moscow News*, and later in the Russian press, began to demand that the British and Americans fulfill their obligation to attack. Hitler was approaching the Don and the Grozny oilfields, and it was the Soviet conviction that only a new front could save the situation.

A ten-day conference of British and American political and military leaders, including Winston Churchill and Harry Hopkins, took place in London in the month of July. Military plans, particularly for the creation of a second front, were discussed, as was also the situation in the Near East should Soviet Armies, cut in two by the German drive on Stalingrad, be in need of help from the south. Soviet representatives did not participate in this conference and this in itself was additional ground for conflict. The impression was created that there was an Anglo-American group within the anti-Axis bloc which was pursuing policies distinct from their third ally.

Soon after this conference Winston Churchill, accompanied by Averell Harriman, flew to Moscow for an exchange of views with Stalin. Although they remained in the Soviet capital from the 10th until the 14th of August their conversations failed to result in complete agreement on a number of questions, particularly on that of the second front. Stalin insisted upon the immediate opening of a second front in Western Europe; he also expressed his displeasure with the London Conference. The Anglo-American representatives, however, emphasized the impossibil-

ity at that time, because of strategic reasons, of landing an army in Western Europe. They offered instead a number of other plans for joint military action.\* Stalin, however, does not appear to have approved of these plans and the Moscow talks thus failed to produce any positive achievements.

Subsequently it became clear that Washington's declaration about the opening of "a second front" in 1942 was made primarily for its effect on Germany; however, this "war of nerves" boomeranged when the Russian people and army did not get the aid they had been led to expect. In the circumstances in which the anti-Axis coalition found itself in 1942 it was not yet ready, it seems, to engage in a "war of nerves" with the Germans. After Churchill's departure from Moscow the Soviet demand for the immediate creation of a second front became more insistent. London and Washington, however, did not deem it feasible to make an immediate landing on the European continent.

In the beginning of October, while Churchill was counseling the British not to speculate about a second front, Stalin came out with an open and unprecedented criticism of his Anglo-American allies for their failure to invade Western Europe. On October 4, in a written reply to a number of questions submitted to him by Mr. Cassidy, chief of the Associated Press in Moscow, Stalin stated:

As compared with the aid which the Soviet Union is giving the Allies by drawing upon itself the main force of the German Fascists, the aid of the Allies to the Soviet Union has so far been little effective. In order to amplify and improve this aid, only one thing is required. that the Allies fulfill their obligations fully and on time.

By this time the battle for Stalingrad had reached its apex. The Germans who had hitherto advanced on a broad front were forced for more than forty days to cease practically all other operations and concentrate their might

\* According to some sources one of the plans, the most important one, was for joint action with the Red Army in the Northern Caucasus of the British land and air forces based in Iran.

on the capture of the city on the Volga. Indeed, beginning with September, 1942, all lightning conquests both in Europe and in the Pacific had definitely ended. The entire energies of the German High Command were now directed to reaching the Volga and isolating the Caucasus.

The battle for Stalingrad marked a turning point in German strategy. Hitler was now beginning to speak of a *defensive* war and this, indeed, opened a new chapter in the history of World War II. For the first time since the war began the strategic situation had changed in favor of the Allies. New possibilities were opening up for striking powerful blows at the German bloc. For this, however, one primary condition was required: the rejection of all concepts of a separate war and the elimination of internal friction within the anti-Axis bloc. And these, like many other things, lay in the future.

# APPENDIX

## SOVIET FOREIGN TRADE, 1939-1941

### I. *New Directions*

LONG before the European war broke out Soviet foreign trade had been an integral part of Soviet foreign policy in general. This was all the more true after September, 1939.

Immediately after the war began both Russia and Germany ceased publishing statistics or any general information on their foreign trade. In this Great Britain followed suit, beginning March 1, 1941. The terms of all new trade agreements were now cloaked in deep secrecy, as was the actual movement of goods. Nevertheless, a good deal of indirect information is available to give a fairly complete picture of Russia's foreign trade policy during this period.

The outbreak of the war in 1939 all but paralyzed Russian foreign commerce. Trade with her chief foreign contractors of the years immediately preceding the war was broken off, her trade with Germany, which had almost reached the vanishing point prior to the outbreak of hostilities, revived but slowly until the end of 1939. From September to December 1940, Soviet foreign trade stood at a very low level.

Soviet export amounted to \$345,000,000 in 1937 and \$266,000,000 in 1938. It was distributed by countries as follows:\*

	1937	1938
	<i>(in millions of dollars)</i>	
Germany . . . . .	21.5	17.5
United States . . . . .	26.8	19.4
England and France . . . . .	130.6	87.0
Belgium and Holland . . . . .	48.4	42.0

In other words, over 50 per cent of Russia's exports went to the countries with which she ceased trade relations in September, 1939 (England, France, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland).

Soon after the outbreak of hostilities between the Allies and Germany, a decree was published empowering Vneshstorg, the Soviet Commissariat for Foreign Trade, to annul trade contracts with foreign firms "if their fulfillment would cause hardship to the Soviet Union."

\* These figures are quoted from Bakulin and Mishustin, *Statistika Vneshney Torgovli* (Moscow, 1940). Following the procedure of the United States Department of Commerce one ruble is figured as 20 cents.



Vnieshtorg was also authorized to demand advance payment on all goods leaving Soviet ports.

Beginning with 1940 there were definite signs of a revival in Russia's foreign trade, this time with Germany occupying first place and the United States second, followed by less important customers—Sweden, Finland, Denmark, and others—with whom she had been able to re-establish trade only after considerable difficulty.

During the second half of 1940 and the beginning of 1941, as the sphere of German occupation widened, a number of European countries, now cut off from world markets, turned to trading with Russia, which, it seemed, was the only source for certain goods, such as oil, cotton, and grain, which they would ordinarily have bought in overseas countries. During the second year of the war many of these countries began sending trade missions to Moscow. Trade negotiations in Moscow were, as a rule, very long drawn out and complicated, and their difficulty was not at all commensurate with the result.

One source for data on Russian foreign trade has been the Turkish records of shipments through the Bosphorus. In 1938 the Soviet Union shipped by this route 3,800,000 metric tons of freight, of which 636,000 tons went to England, 360,000 tons to France, 538,000 to the United States, and 664,000 to Greece. A substantial part of Russia's exports thus went to various countries except Germany through the Dardanelles. In 1940, however, Russia shipped from Black Sea ports 312,000 tons altogether, or one-twelfth the amount of 1938; of this 174,000 went to the United States and 101,000 to Greece.<sup>1</sup> This did not mean that Russia's Black Sea trade had ceased altogether. It was now being rerouted from Black Sea ports to Rumania and Bulgaria, and thence to Germany.

In one year and a half—from January 1, 1940, until the outbreak of Russo-German hostilities—Russian exports and imports can be estimated on an average as between \$16,000,000 and \$20,000,000 a month for all countries, with the exception of China. Of these exports valued at from \$8,000,000 to \$12,000,000 went to Germany, \$6,000,000 worth to the United States, and perhaps \$2,000,000 to \$3,000,000 worth to the remaining countries. During this period Soviet exports to certain countries, such as Finland and Germany, exceeded imports, while in the case of some other countries, such as Sweden, the reverse was the case.

Although Soviet Russia concluded many commercial treaties during these months, many of them failed to produce concrete results. A table of the trade treaties concluded by Moscow from August, 1939, to June, 1941, offers great interest, not only for the countries it includes but also for its omissions. The coalition of Britain,\* France, and Turkey is missing from it. So is Italy, while Japan appears first in June, 1941.

\* In the case of England the trade agreement of October, 1939, merely rounded out certain arrangements of the prewar period. Extremely limited in scope, it was, as a matter of fact, never fully carried out, and in December, 1939, it ceased to operate.

On the other hand, the countries of the German bloc, with the exception of Italy, are well represented, as are the German occupied territories and those that had come within the sphere of the "New Order," like Sweden, Finland, and Switzerland.

TRADE AGREEMENTS CONCLUDED BY  
SOVIET RUSSIA IN 1939-1941

Country	Date of Agreement	Anticipated amounts (as far as known) for each side, per year, in millions of dollars.
1. <i>Germany</i>	August 19, 1939 February 11, 1940 January 10, 1941	
2. <i>United States</i>	August 2, 1939 August 6, 1940 August 2, 1941 August 1, 1942	

OCCUPIED COUNTRIES

3. <i>Denmark</i>	September 18, 1940 May 21, 1941	1.7 (6 months) 6.5 (13 months)
4. <i>Belgium</i>	April 4, 1941	
5. <i>Norway</i>	April 10, 1941	

COUNTRIES UNDER GERMAN DOMINATION

6. <i>Hungary</i>	September 3, 1940	3.7
7. <i>Slovakia</i>	December 6, 1940	2.4
8. <i>Rumania</i>	February 26, 1941	4.0

COUNTRIES OF GERMAN TRADE PREDOMINANCE

9. <i>Finland</i>	June 29, 1940	7.5
10. <i>Sweden</i>	September 8, 1940	18.0 (exports) 24.0 (imports)
11. <i>Switzerland</i>	January 24, 1941	26.0

ASIA

12. <i>Afghanistan</i>	June 25, 1940	
13. <i>Iran</i>	March 26, 1940	
14. <i>Japan</i>	June 11, 1941	7.0

TRADE AGREEMENTS OF A POLITICAL NATURE

15. <i>China</i>	June 16-23, 1939 June , 1940 December 11, 1940 January 3, 12, 1941	(see below)
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16. <i>Bulgaria</i>	January 5, 1940	6.0
17. <i>Yugoslavia</i>	May 11, 1940	2.0

A realistic understanding of Soviet trade policy requires a consideration of its trade relations country by country.

## 2. *Soviet Trade with Germany*

RUSSIA'S trade relations with Germany between 1939 and 1941 were significant both for the actual exchange of commodities and for the impression they created of a mighty Russo-German economic bloc. As already indicated, little information was published regarding their trade agreements.

Russo-German trade was regulated by three agreements. October, 1939, February 11, 1940, and January 10, 1941.

### *First Agreements*

The first trade treaty, signed a fortnight before the war, was ill-fated, as we have seen in Chapter III, §8. Following Von Ribbentrop's second visit to Moscow, at the end of September, 1939, a German mission, consisting of twelve experts headed by Dr. Schnurre, arrived in Moscow. It took over a month to reach any sort of understanding and a new, limited Russo-German trade agreement was signed only at the end of October. This agreement which incidentally has never been published, stipulated that the Soviets were to supply Germany within two months with 1,000,000 tons of grain, manganese, flax, and other products. It was only, however, in November and December that Russia actually began to export to Germany. Thus during the first five months of war Russian economic aid to Germany was rather negligible. Perhaps it did not amount to more than \$10,000,000.<sup>2</sup>

Immediately after the conclusion of the October agreement a Soviet delegation of forty-five left for Berlin to prepare the ground for placing Russian orders in Germany. A second delegation followed a few days later. These delegations laid the basis for the conclusion of the second agreement.

In the meantime, on December 24, 1939, a railroad agreement was signed at Moscow between Russia and Germany. By it Russia agreed to establish eight frontier junction points in order to facilitate passenger and freight traffic with Germany. Moscow also promised to leave intact for a period of three years the railroads in southeastern Poland (the railroad gauge of all European countries is two inches narrower than the Russian gauge), so that there would be no interruption in traffic from Rumania. In Przemysl, on the Soviet-German border, special equipment was also installed for the direct pumping of oil.

### *Second Agreement*

The second trade agreement between Russia and Germany was signed on February 11, 1940, after prolonged and rather difficult negotiations.

Only after Von Ribbentrop had appealed personally by letter to Stalin and the latter had intervened directly was a settlement reached.

The terms of the second agreement were also kept secret, and the official communiqués regarding it were brief. On February 11 Tass reported that during the next year:

The exchange of commodities between Germany and the U. S. S. R. shall exceed greatly all trade levels reached by the two countries since the World War. On both sides there is a desire to increase still further trade exchanges between Germany and the U. S. S. R.

Except for laudatory articles the German press was vague about the agreement. In special German trade publications some skeptical voices inquired whether Russia had large enough surpluses to fulfill her contractual obligations.

A careful analysis of what can be known of this trade agreement gives the following picture: both sides promised to increase their trade so that it would exceed "all levels reached by the two countries since the World War." The high mark in Russo-German trade was reached in 1931, when German imports from Russia amounted to \$72,000,000 in gold (303,500,000 marks) and Russian imports from Germany to \$183,000,000 (762,000,000 marks), or a combined total of \$255,000,000 in gold.<sup>3</sup> If their trade turnover now reached the same level, it would have meant that each side had to export goods worth about \$125,000,000 in gold.

Furthermore, Russia agreed to facilitate the transport of goods to Germany from Iran, Afghanistan, Shanghai, Manchuria, and other points. By this means Berlin was to be enabled to import American products via the Far East.

On the other hand, German ability to export manufactured goods was extremely limited and Russia advanced some credits to her. Incidentally, this was a contrast to the prewar situation, when the Soviets had received large credits from both Germany and England. Of the manufactured goods which Germany exported to Russia during the war, two categories are of special interest. The Germans exported arms produced in Germany and in Czechoslovakia. According to German sources, Berlin found it possible, even during the war, to sell various types of arms to Finland, Rumania, and China. In a pamphlet published by the Soviet Commissariat of Foreign Affairs in 1940, Tikhomirov stated that, according to the Russo-German trade agreement, "Germany will supply to the Soviet Union manufactured goods and also military articles."<sup>4</sup> (In this connection it is interesting to note that neither the Kremlin nor the Wilhelmstrasse ever denied the widely published rumors of Germany's having sold Russia 300 airplanes during the Finnish War.)

In addition Germany undertook to build for Russia a number of merchant ships and, according to some sources, even armored vessels.<sup>5</sup> It was no secret that Commissar Tevosyan had inspected German ship-

yards during his visit <sup>6</sup> Germany also agreed to supply Russia with various parts and machinery for vessels to be built in Soviet shipyards.

In the carrying out of the agreement of February, 1940, a number of difficulties arose, as was inevitable in wartime. Although Germany had received credits in goods, she was not able to fulfill her foreign trade obligations toward Russia; at the beginning of 1941 their turnover was lagging to the amount of 50,000,000 marks <sup>7</sup>

#### *Third Agreement*

In signing a third agreement, on January 10, 1941, the Soviet negotiators insisted upon a provision that the exports and imports of the two countries be balanced every quarter, a stipulation which was finally inserted in the treaty <sup>8</sup> The official communiqués issued upon the conclusion of this agreement spoke of its broad scope, of wheat transactions of a volume never before known, and so forth. What they failed to mention was that the provision for equalizing their trade every quarter actually greatly decreased the turnover between the two countries, and that the entire treaty, which had been heralded with much fanfare by both countries, was merely "the frame of a trade agreement," the real significance of which could only be determined in actual day-by-day practice.

The new agreement was intended to regulate the mutual trade from February 11, 1941 (the date of expiration of the second agreement), until August 8, 1942 <sup>9</sup> Its framework also covered the Moscow agreement of April 10, 1941, for supplying oil to Germany. It was also announced that Russia was ready to send to Germany in 1941 a million and a half tons of grain. Even the Deutsches Nachrichten Büro referred to this agreement as an "economic plan." All German trade with the former Baltic States was now covered by this agreement, thereby liquidating automatically their trade treaties with Berlin.

During the first three months of 1941, a period of intense rivalry over the Balkans, Soviet exports to Germany were modest in scope. Only at the end of April, when a final attempt was being made to reestablish normal relations between the two countries, did Russia appreciably increase her shipments of grain and oil <sup>10</sup>

This friction lowered the value of Russo-German economic collaboration, and this fact was not among the least of the reasons which eventually prompted Hitler to attack the Soviets. Germany at war was not in a position to repay in goods the tremendous flow of commodities which she had hoped to receive from Russia and which she badly needed. For this reason Berlin could not very well object to Russia's failure to fulfill her obligations. Even after Germany had declared war on the Soviets, neither Hitler nor Von Ribbentrop, in enumerating all the crimes and violations committed by Moscow, accused Russia of failure to live up to her trade obligations. However, the Soviets did extend to Germany during the years 1940-41 a number of other services of an economic nature.

In the course of their negotiations Russia and Germany also reached an agreement on consular representation. Germany was allowed to establish consulates at Leningrad, Vladivostok, and Batum; Russia at Hamburg, Königsberg, and Vienna. The political significance of this agreement becomes clear when we remember that before the war Russia had systematically closed down foreign consulates, particularly German consulates, which she regarded as centers of espionage. At the beginning of the war all German consulates outside of Moscow had been closed in Russia. The opening of a consular office at Vladivostok was obviously intended to facilitate Germany's Far Eastern trade.

In the early months of the war both Russia and Germany experienced great difficulties in transporting goods from Rumania. The main Cernăuți-Lwów-Berlin line was poorly organized, and whole carloads destined for Germany disappeared in transit. The situation became desperate, and after repeated requests the Germans, according to Bucharest sources, were permitted to convoy all goods shipped over this route to the Reich.<sup>11</sup>

Air communications between Germany and Russia, interrupted shortly before the outbreak of the war, were resumed. On January 21, 1940, the anniversary of Lenin's death, the Moscow-Berlin air line began to operate once more.

Of vital importance to Germany was the shipment of oil via the Black Sea. Soviet oil went through pipelines from Baku to Batum, from Batum by sea to Constantza (Rumania) or Varna (Bulgaria), then to the nearest Danubian port, Russe (Ruschuk), whence it was carried in barges to Germany. For this purpose the port of Varna was considerably enlarged, and numerous Italian and Soviet oil tankers plied the Black Sea.

In the autumn of 1940 the water route from the Black Sea by way of the Dnieper and the Pripet to Brest-Litovsk was opened up, it began to be used at once for the transportation of various goods to Germany. At the same time the transport of Japanese or Japanese-bought goods designated for Germany over the Trans-Siberian Railway increased enormously, even though the railway tariff was raised fivefold. Japan exported to Germany soy beans, meat, rice, and cotton and received in return chemicals, instruments, etc.<sup>12</sup>

By the end of 1939 large quantities of goods were being shipped from the Dutch East Indies through the Russian port of Vladivostok. According to official data, between January and August, 1939, 520,000 kilograms of commodities, worth 312,000 Dutch guilders were shipped from the East Indies through Vladivostok, during the last five months of 1939 10,611,000 kilograms of commodities valued at 3,251,000 guilders were similarly shipped from the East Indies to Germany. "It is not doubted," wrote the *Straits Times* (published in Singapore) cautiously, "that some of these supplies are intended for Germany."<sup>13</sup>

From January, 1941 on, Soviet trade representatives opened negotia-

tions in South America, particularly with the Argentine, for the purchase of wheat. These negotiations were indirectly linked up to the obligations which Russia had undertaken toward Germany. Before the outbreak of the Russo-German War the shipment of South American wheat to the Soviets had been negligible. At the same time the Russian trading office in Berlin expanded enormously, until it came to employ between five and seven hundred people.

These are the high lights of the close economic collaboration between Germany and Russia at this time. Economic missions, experts, commercial attachés, were constantly traveling between Berlin and Moscow. The Soviet capital was full of Germans on every kind of commercial mission. If Hitler considered it wise, in the interest of his vaster goals, to strengthen his potential enemy, Stalin in turn hoped through intimate economic collaboration to remove some of the deep-seated social and political contradictions between them and to prolong the "breathing spell." Stalin not merely concluded, but also observed scrupulously, his agreements with Germany.

It is rather difficult to draw an exact balance sheet of Russo-German trade for the twenty-two months of their close economic collaboration. One can merely give approximate figures. On August 7, 1941, after the commencement of Russo-German hostilities, the British Government stated, in reply to a question in the House of Commons, that "in recent months Germany imported from the Soviet Union substantial quantities of essential war materials, oil imports for this period were in the neighborhood of 1,000,000 tons, including lubricants and aviation oil. . . . About 500,000 tons of commodities reached Germany from Japan, including rubber, tin, copper, and tungsten." From the indirect data available some approximations are possible. In an article on German foreign trade published in *Berlin-Rome-Tokyo* of February, 1941, Dr. Karl Clodius stated that first place in Germany's foreign trade was held by Sweden, which exported more goods to the Reich than did Soviet Russia. He also mentioned that henceforth 70 per cent of Sweden's foreign exports would go to Germany instead of the 56 per cent shipped in 1940. Sweden also published some figures on her foreign trade, showing that her entire export in 1940 amounted to 1,337,000,000 kroners<sup>14</sup> or \$315,000,000. Thus Germany's share of Sweden's foreign trade was about \$160,000,000; under the new arrangement it would become \$215,000,000 and obviously Soviet exports were under that figure.

A more exact, although equally indirect, source of information is furnished in a speech delivered June 14, 1941, in Vienna by the German Minister of Economics, Dr. Funk. According to his report, Russo-German trade had increased 10 times as against the last year of peace. If we take 1938 as a calendar year, then Russian exports to Germany amounted to \$17,700,000. This would mean that for 1940 they reached about \$177,000,000. If, on the other hand, we consider the period from July 1, 1938, to June 30, 1939, as the last prewar year, then Rus-

sian exports to Germany can be estimated at \$15,500,000. Therefore Soviet exports to Germany for 1940 can be placed at between \$155,000,000 and \$180,000,000.

Thus during the twenty-two months from September 1, 1939, to June 21, 1941, Soviet exports to Germany were probably between \$200,000,000 and \$250,000,000. During the same months American exports to Russia amounted to \$141,000,000.

In other words, Soviet-German trade for twenty-two months—from the outbreak of the European war to the commencement of Russo-German hostilities, was more significant politically than economically. In the German struggle against the British blockade, it was by far too weak as a weapon and its propaganda value in no way corresponded to the actual volume of the trade turnover.

### 3. *Soviet Trade with the United States and Other Countries*

At the beginning of 1939 Russian-American trade prospects were not bright. For the first nine months of that year American exports to Soviet Russia amounted to \$28,807,000 compared with \$53,383,000 for the same period of 1938. By the end of the year, however, there had been considerable improvement, which was directly attributable to the effect of the European war. In the last three months of 1939 the exports of the United States to Russia rose to \$27,830,000. During 1940 Russian-American trade was on a fairly high level, American exports amounting to \$86,943,999. In the first six months of 1941, preceding the outbreak of the Russo-German War, it declined again, totaling only \$24,481,500 as against \$42,543,500 for the same period in 1940.

In the entire period of almost two years between September 1, 1939, and the end of June, 1941, as we have seen, the United States exported to Russia goods worth \$141,039,000. This was rather a modest sum, particularly in view of the fact that in 1930 American exports to Russia had amounted to \$114,000,000 and in 1931 to \$104,000,000. The small volume of this trade during the first two years of the war can be attributed to purely political considerations. Soviet-American trade registered a considerable improvement only after Germany declared war on Russia. Within three months after the declaration of war American exports to the Soviet Union reached \$7,000,000 per month, increasing further during the fourth quarter of 1941, and particularly in 1942, following a great improvement in the political relations between the two countries.

*Denmark* A Russo-Danish trade treaty, concluded on September 18, 1940, for a six months' period, stipulated a trade turnover of 7,200,000 kroners each way. A second treaty was signed on May, 1941, providing for a turnover of 28,500,000 kroners in each direction during the period March 18, 1941, to April 30, 1942.<sup>15</sup> Denmark was to export machines and other equipment to Russia in exchange for Soviet cotton, oil products, tobacco, timber, etc.



*Belgium* The agreement with Belgium was in practice ineffective because of the outbreak of Russo-German hostilities.

*Norway* Attempts to reach a trade agreement between Moscow and Oslo were made for months before an agreement was actually arrived at; the delay was largely due to German protests. By a tentative agreement Russia had promised to supply Norway, which was badly in need of foodstuffs, with grain in return for Norwegian aluminum. But Germany, which required aluminum for her aviation industry, protested vigorously.<sup>16</sup> The agreement subsequently concluded was, to all intent and purposes, stillborn.

*Hungary* On the basis of their agreement of September 3, 1940, Hungary was to deliver to Russia eight Danubian vessels, several thousand railroad cars, and more than 2,000 Diesel engines.<sup>17</sup> The two countries also agreed to reestablish direct railway and telegraph communications; this was done in April, 1941. The Soviet Government also opened up a commercial agency in Budapest.

*Slovakia* The agreement with Slovakia was based on the "most-favored-nation" clause. Slovakia undertook to supply Russia with electric motors, steel pipes, cables, yarn, and other products, in exchange for Russian cotton, grain, phosphates, etc. The trade turnover was set at \$2,400,000 in each direction.<sup>18</sup>

*Rumania* Rumania's trade position was an exception to the rule, as she was not in need of Russian oil and even undertook to supply the Soviets with gasoline, mineral oils, and other industrial products. Russia, on the other hand, was to sell Rumania cotton, manganese, and other raw materials. During the first year their trade turnover was to amount to \$8,000,000<sup>19</sup>

*Finland* The Finnish agreement with Soviet Russia was concluded on June 29, 1940, on the same day as the Finnish trade treaty with Germany. The Russo-Finnish agreement anticipated a rather large turnover, about \$7,500,000 a year in each direction.

*Sweden* Sweden signed a significant commercial treaty with the Soviets, granting Russia credits up to 100,000,000 kroners, or \$24,000,000, for five years, with interest at 4½ per cent. Russia could use these credits over a period of two years. According to the Russo-Swedish agreement, Sweden was to export to Russia goods worth \$24,000,000 per year and to import goods to the amount of about \$18,000,000. This represented a tremendous increase in Russo-Swedish trade; in 1938 Sweden had exported to Russia commodities worth about \$4,000,000, while her Russian imports amounted to about \$3,000,000. Sweden exported railroad equipment, machinery, and precision instruments, and received in exchange grain and gasoline.<sup>20</sup>

*Switzerland* The agreement between Switzerland and Russia was supposed to result in a substantial trade turnover between the two countries; 112,400,000 francs, or \$26,000,000, in each direction during the first year, and 150,000,000 francs, or \$35,000,000, during the second. However, nothing came of this agreement, as the German

and Italian declarations of war against the Soviets severed all Swiss trade contacts with Russia.

*Japan* Russia signed two agreements with Japan eleven days before she became involved in war with Germany. The agreements, which were never ratified, provided for exchanges amounting to 30,000,000 yen, or \$7,000,000, in each direction. One important aspect of these treaties was the agreement on transit between Japan and Germany over the Trans-Siberian Railway.

*China* Soviet trade with China had regularly been more in the nature of wartime assistance than it was commercial. On June 16, 1939, a treaty was signed in Moscow, on the basis of the "most-favored-nation" clause, regulating trade and shipping, and defining the legal status of Russian trade representatives in China. Connected with it was a new credit agreement of June 23, 1939, the third such agreement, amounting to 750,000,000 rubles (\$100,000,000 to \$150,000,000), repayable in five to ten years. The credit was earmarked for the purchase of airplanes, trucks, tanks, arms, and ammunition. This treaty was subsequently extended in June, 1940.

Further trade agreements provided for Chinese deliveries of tea worth 100,000,000 Chinese dollars (\$6,200,000), concluded on December 11, 1940, of wool (concluded on January 3, 1940), and of Chinese minerals worth \$100,000,000 (concluded on January 12, 1941).<sup>21</sup>

*Bulgaria* The treaty was concluded for three years, on the basis of the most-favored-nation clause. The trade turnover during the first year was to have reached 920,000,000 levas (\$12,000,000).

*Yugoslavia* The treaty involved a trade turnover to the amount of 176,000,000 dinars (about \$4,000,000). Its significance was more political than economic.

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